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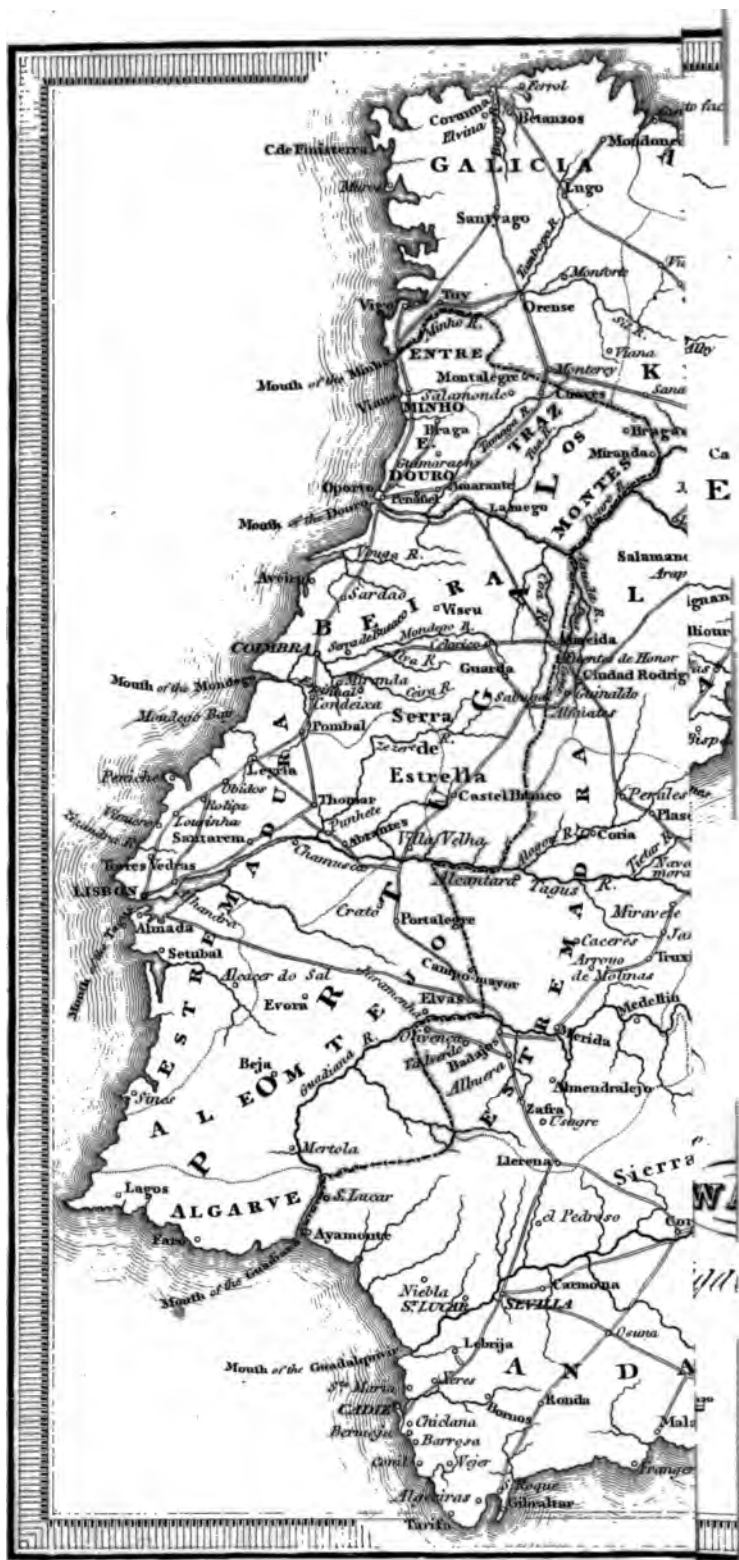


R. B. Widdall Ramsay









ACCOUNT
OF THE
WAR
IN
SPAIN, PORTUGAL,
AND
THE SOUTH OF FRANCE,
FROM 1808 TO 1814 INCLUSIVE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY
JOHN T. JONES,
LIEUT. COLONEL, CORPS OF ROYAL ENGINEERS.

SECOND EDITION.

VOL. I.

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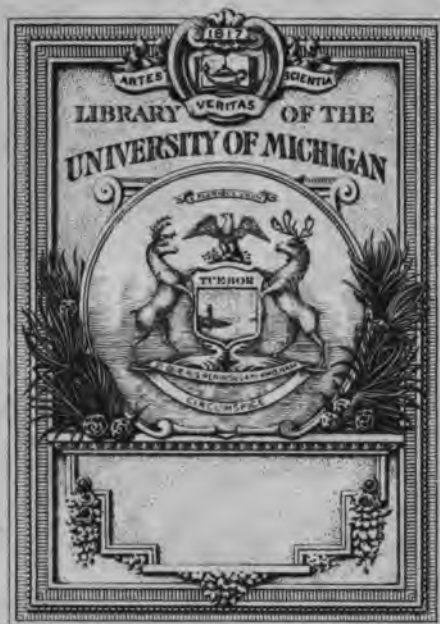
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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE determination to submit this work to the public arose from the numerous memoirs on the war in the Peninsula, published by French officers, and the announcement of the speedy appearance of more laboured productions on the same subject, without any British officer stepping forward with a narrative of the actions of his countrymen.

It is constantly observed in the recital of the most ordinary events of life, that the details are made to appear materially different by the several actors; each indulging in animated description of the scenes in which he was personally engaged, and, through ignorance, either misrepresenting or passing over in silence the part borne by others. This unintentional deviation from equity applies with double force to the writings of belligerent nations, as, however pure the intentions of the authors, a variety of



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R. B. Hurdless Ramsay



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incidents creditable to the hostile force must be imperfectly understood, or altogether unknown to them; and consequently it serves considerably to enhance the martial reputation of a people, that its own narratives should be implicitly received, even if drawn up with all possible attention to candour. It will therefore readily be conceived that such an advantage is carried to an undue extent in France, when most of the writings which have appeared respecting the war in the Peninsula, are avowedly attempts to sustain the reputation of particular individuals, or to uphold the deeds of particular armies, and consequently written under the bias of personal as well as national feeling. Passing through such refracting mediums every action and circumstance is distorted. Severity of examination is, however, in some degree averted by the avowal of the motives which actuated the authors; and the knowledge that many of the chiefs, whom their writings were framed to eulogize, are already removed from the enjoyment of praise, and that the troops, whose merit they were intended to exalt, have been nearly exterminated, serves further to repress the exposure of their errors, and has hitherto gained uncontradicted currency for their statements.

Other writings, of a different description, on the same subject, appeared during the temporary reinstatement of the imperial rule, framed

chiefly with a view to raise the confidence and reanimate the courage of the troops, by deceiving them into a belief that, though collectively unfortunate, they had ever been individually victorious. The exaggerations for this purpose are so gross and palpable as to carry their own detection, and their currency, it may be hoped, will be nearly as evanescent as the government they were intended to uphold.

A History of the War in Spain, originally published in England, is of a third description, and is more calculated to mislead than either of the former, as the author, without the apology of country or friends to support, has, under an ostentatious affectation of candour, well succeeded in giving a false colouring to all he relates; extraordinary boldness of assertion throughout being rendered plausible by reasoning founded on extreme ignorance of the localities, and of the details of his subject.

The tendency of these writings, however more or less vitiated the source from whence they flow, or however transient their duration, is unquestionably to shake that universally high opinion formed of the Portuguese and British military from their success in the Peninsula; for what disinterested or impartial man, after reading of such gross blunders, such want of enterprize, such ignorance of the art of war as is imputed to them, and to their com-

mander, on each separate occasion, does not feel his opinion of their merit diminished, and almost regret their general success over opponents represented as so much braver, and so much more skilful? Now, as local knowledge and personal observation are necessary to the detection of many of these delusions, is it not too probable, unless the future historian shall have it in his power to contrast the French statements with others of equal or similar authority, that they may, in a few years, be admitted as facts, and the details of a series of brilliant triumphs furnish laurels only to the vanquished? These considerations are submitted as an apology for a soldier's stepping out of his line to undertake a task for which he feels himself little qualified.

It is not intended by the foregoing observations to impute wilful misrepresentation to the French officers; prejudice and personal feeling frequently blinding the judgment and perverting the understanding, as is strongly exemplified in the writings of our own countrymen respecting their allies; many of which by actors in the scene, and penned at the moment, must be considered expressions of genuine feeling, as well as ocular testimony of passing events. A most striking instance of this delusion is found in the various accounts of the train of disasters which preceded the fall of a much

esteemed officer at the commencement of the war. Every sufferer on that occasion taxed the natives with having been in some mode or other the authors of his misfortunes; and the numerous military friends of that respected chief, influenced by his desponding feelings, and desirous to exonerate his conduct and sustain his reputation, even went farther, representing the Spaniards not only as apathetic and cowardly, but as totally devoid of good will; and to such extent did national vanity warp the good sense of the people of England, that these aspersions were most implicitly received, and most loudly echoed, at the moment when the Galicians were offering the noblest vindication of their character, by expelling, and nearly annihilating the intruders.

Even to this hour the statements of the British officers have left an impression unfavourable to those mountaineers, notwithstanding that time and more happy events have so far softened down personal and national feeling, that we inquire with astonishment how such prejudices could have arisen, and on what ground it was expected that an unarmed peasantry should oppose the French at the moment when the finest troops they ever beheld, or, perhaps, that ever were seen, which they regarded as invincible, and which they dignified with every vaunting appellation, deemed them-

general desolation produced by the silent progress of evils far more calamitous, can only be marked by a summary of their results—so it is with the opposition of the Spanish people to the French armies, infinitely more fatal in its effects than brilliant in its operation. The writer therefore considered it better to make this preliminary admission of the great benefit which accrued to the allied armies from the general good will of the inhabitants, than to interrupt the military narrative by the introduction of the various instances of it within his knowledge, which, though highly creditable to individuals, had only a secondary influence on the event of the operation, and would prove of little interest to the reader.

The reasons for omitting the details of most of the actions fought by the Spanish armies, would be most satisfactorily explained by an appeal to the French officers, were it practicable, many of them having stated to the writer, that their greatest victories were nearly bloodless to themselves; various Spanish officers of distinction admit the fact; such is the testimony of several British officers who had opportunities of ascertaining the reality; and the writer has had ocular proof of the ease with which the French obtained more than one of their principal successes. A judgment from these data forms the scale on which he rates

that he thinks it advisable to offer a few exculpatory observations on the following points:

1st. The little mention made of the exertions of the Spanish people subsequently to the first burst of popular feeling.

2d. The omission of the details of nearly all the battles fought by the Spaniards separately against the French.

3d. The little credit latterly assigned to the Guerrillas.

4th. The unvaried failure of success attributed to the efforts of the French against the British, and the reverse as attending the efforts of the British against the French.

Although the writer, from strict adherence to a belief founded on great opportunities of personal observation, totally denies the Spaniards the credit of those acts of hostility attributed to them by many others, as arising from an enthusiasm regardless of consequences, he is far from undervaluing an enmity always constant, always in activity, carried on with policy, and under great deception. It will, however, readily be perceived that a few scattered instances of the former would give more scope for detail than successive years of the latter conduct. As the blast of the tempest, or the raging of the whirlwind, though local in their action, and transient in their duration, offer many descriptive particulars, whilst the

their efficiency, and the advantage drawn from them, could not be too highly valued; when united into large corps, they had all the inconveniences of regular armies without their good qualities.

The last point requires a more full examination, as strong suspicion of want of candour must naturally attach to the narrative of an officer of a rival nation, which, in seven active campaigns, denies one solitary triumph over his countrymen to those generals by whose tactics, and to those troops by whose prowess, every opponent had been previously overcome.

The talents of the French commanders are admitted to the fullest extent: they frequently displayed the greatest ability, and the powerful armies entrusted to their charge were often manœuvred with peculiar skill; and so far is the writer from possessing any illiberality of feeling towards them, that he will venture an apology for their want of success against the British in the early periods of the war, by stating what he considers to have been the principal cause.

For fifteen years preceding that time the conscription laws had reigned in France with irresistible sway; every public and every private interest had sunk before them, and under their unrelenting grasp the entire male population of the country had been marshalled

against the surplus population of other states, and, consequently, in French military enterprises the object of least solicitude was the preservation of human life. Trained under such a system, their commanders in Spain were little fitted to appreciate that combination of prudence and boldness so happily blended in the conduct of their opponent: reasoning only on their own ideas of the value of men, they were constantly deceived by his unvarying steadiness in pursuing the object marked out for himself; never sacrificing his troops for the chance of converting a certain into a more brilliant result; but, whenever requisite, resorting to the boldest measures, and deeming no loss nor hazard too great to ensure success. Their own dispatches bear ample proof of their having been the dupes of the former conduct. The passage of the Douro in 1809; the siege of Rodrigo, immediately after having relinquished the blockade; the still more arduous attack of Badajos; and the unexampled boldness of the march on Almaraz, are unquestionable examples of the latter; each deceiving the French commanders, and succeeding by a great, but well-judged temerity.

The strongest exemplification, however, is to be drawn from the action of Fuentes de Honor, fought to gain possession of Almeida

soon after the conclusion of Marshal Massena's retreat out of Portugal. That officer, after spending five months near Lisbon, fruitlessly offering battle under the most disadvantageous circumstances, till his forces were completely disorganized and half wasted away, little expected that the moment his army was re-composed, reinforced, and again formidable, he should find his prudent competitor suddenly transformed into the boldest of adversaries, offering battle on most disadvantageous ground, and with retreat nearly impracticable. In the one case, the object in view was certain of being attained without risk; in the other, the prize could only be gained by hazarding all. This contrasted conduct offers the highest display of prudence, judgment, and boldness, forming so pure an example of the legitimate use of battles, as must have been incomprehensible to the French commanders of the revolution, and by such they were constantly foiled, and the superior force under their command rendered of no avail.

The merit of the French troops is also fully admitted. The soldiers, which originally composed the French armies in Spain, become veterans in a succession of victories, were certainly excellent, something superior to those composing the generality of armies: they displayed a degree of firmness from disciplined

courage and individual confidence, which on many occasions excited the admiration of their opponents; the columns of attack at Talavera, at Albuera, and even in the Pyrenees, were apparently as firm, and as intrepid, as the celebrated Grecian phalanx; and in their patient endurance of privations, particularly in Portugal, they evinced a steady attachment to their country, and to their chiefs, beyond the ordinary patriotism of modern soldiers. Nevertheless the most diligent research furnishes no instance of the French having, at the conclusion of any of the several general actions in the Peninsula, retained possession of any principal post, or prominent feature of ground, previously occupied by the British; nor, in their defensive general actions, of their having maintained any position from which the British made an effort to dislodge them. On this simple and plain fact, so open to refutation if untrue, the writer rests his exculpation from unfairness, and, without further comment, submits it to the reader as the standard on which to form his own opinion of the comparative merit of the troops of the two nations.

Unconscious of any particular bias or feeling, the writer has endeavoured, from his own observation, and a correspondence with officers of discernment and judgment, to draw up a faithful and impartial military account of the

late war in Spain, Portugal, and the South of France. As little as is consistent with clearness has been said on other subjects, and few opinions have been hazarded. No fact has been admitted without the strictest investigation: in consequence a variety of current anecdotes have been rejected which might have enlivened and embellished the narrative. Many errors, however, he fears, may have glided into the composition: some accidental omissions of minor occurrences he has himself observed; all he claims credit for is general correctness and strict impartiality, that the reader who deems the work deficient in entertainment or information shall have no cause to complain of being imposed upon or misled; and that the historian may find an unvarnished tale on which safely to rely when handing down to posterity the events of the proudest æra in the military history of Great Britain.

Cambray, 19th July, 1817.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE first Edition of this work was exhausted within a twelvemonth from its publication; since which period professional duties have occupied the time and mind of the Author, leaving him little leisure to re-consider his subject, and have occasioned the delay which has taken place in the appearance of a second Edition.

As correctness can alone give value to a military narrative, the Author has not scrupled in his revision to change the text wherever judged erroneous, either in opinion or facts; and several officers of rank having pointed out various inaccuracies and omissions with respect to the troops under their command, they have equally been rectified; he has also had the good luck to obtain some authentic documents which have enabled him to detail the particulars of many occurrences only simply men-

tioned in the first edition, and which has swelled the work into two volumes. In this enlarged state, the Author is still far from considering his publication a complete history, but till such appear, he trusts that it will be found useful, as a connected and faithful narrative of the military operations in the Peninsula.

CONTENTS

OF

VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.

FRIENDLY Relations between Spain and France—Internal State of Spain—her severe Sufferings and Losses—Discontent of the People—The Prince of the Peace endeavours to make her assume an independent attitude—Napoleon Buonaparte in consequence vows to supplant the Bourbon Dynasty by his own—Pretensions of the Buonaparte Family—Secret Treaty between the Rulers of France and Spain to partition Portugal—their combined Armies take Possession of Lisbon—A French Force admitted into the Northern Provinces of Spain as Friends—Aggressive Demands of Napoleon—Popular Commotion at Aranjuez—Charles abdicates, and Ferdinand is proclaimed King—French Forces enter Madrid—Charles protests against his Act of Abdication—Buonaparte makes himself Arbiter between the Father and Son—cajoles the Royal Family to Bayonne—forces them to surrender their Rights, and sends them for security into France. *Page 1*

CHAPTER II.

Marshal Murat makes himself acknowledged President of the Junta of Government—The Spaniards remain quiet in anxious suspense—perceive the danger that threatens them—si-

multaneously rise against the Intruders—apply to England for assistance—State of the Contest between England and France—England embraces with ardour the Cause of the Patriots—Napoleon convokes a National Assembly at Bayonne—names his Brother Joseph, King of Spain—acknowledged by most of the Dignitaries of Church and State—Military Exertions of the Patriots in the South—one of their Armies completely dispersed at Medina del Rio Seco—Joseph triumphantly enters Madrid—French Corps under General Dupont surrenders to the Patriots—The Intruders concentrate behind the Ebro—Defence of Zaragossa—The Marquis de la Romana effects the Escape of his Army—The formation of a supreme Government decided. 43

CHAPTER III.

Affairs of Portugal—Exactions of the French—Resistance of the People—Endeavours to coerce them into submission—A British Force arrives to their assistance—lands in Mondego Bay—drives back the French advanced Corps at Roliça—defeats their main body under General Junot at Vimiera—The Commanders enter into a Convention for the Evacuation of the Country by the French—its Stipulations and Execution. 77

CHAPTER IV.

Exertions of the Spaniards individually—Inefficient state of their Armies—Central Junta installed—its want of energy and authority—Reinforcements to the French announced—Arrangements of the Spaniards to oppose them—A British Force marches from Portugal, and a Corps lands in Galicia to their assistance—Military Force of France and England—Bonaparte enters Spain in person—Successive Destruction of the Spanish Armies at Zornosa, Burgos, Tudela, and Somo Sierra—The British Commander reaches Salamanca—

| | |
|---|-----|
| his difficulties and embarrassments—Buonaparte gains Possession of Madrid—his subsequent conduct. . . . | 103 |
|---|-----|

CHAPTER V.

| | |
|---|-----|
| General disbelief of the Surrender of Madrid—Sir John Moore advances to its succour—is apprised of its surrender—plans an effort to cut off a French Corps at Saldanha—is nearly surrounded in the attempt—saves his Army by a rapid march on Galicia—continues his Retreat to Corunna—The Army repulse their Pursuers in front of the Town—embark without molestation—Further Losses and Disasters of the Spaniards—Heroic Defence of Zaragossa. | 138 |
|---|-----|

CHAPTER VI.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Occurrences in Portugal—Portuguese Military—Marshal Soult captures Vigo and Tuy—crosses the Minho—defeats the Marquis de la Romana—takes Chaves—disperses the Portuguese Forces—captures Oporto—Spaniards defeated at Medellin and Ciudad Real—Sir Arthur Wellesley arrives to command in Portugal—forces the Passage of the Douro—recovers Oporto—drives Soult into Galicia—returns to oppose Marshal Victor on the Tagus—Efforts of the Spaniards—Recapture of Vigo—Repulse of the French at the Passage of the Soto Mayor—Evacuation of Galicia by Marshal Ney—Movements in Aragon and Catalonia—Exertions of the Supreme Junta—Guerrillas. | 186 |
|--|-----|

CHAPTER VII.

| | |
|--|--|
| The Armies of General Cuesta and Lord Wellington unite to engage the French—come into contact with a corps on the Alberche—General Cuesta declines to attack—The French retire in the night on other Corps—The Spaniards pursue them—are driven back on the English—The united Armies take | |
|--|--|

up a position in front of Talavera—are vigorously attacked by Joseph Buonaparte—repulse every effort to force them—The French withdraw—the Corps of Marshals Soult, Ney, and Mortier arrive at Placencia through the Pass of Baños—The British retire unmolested to Jaraicejo—want of food forces them back to Badajos—The Spaniards defeated at Almonacid and Ocaña—Distrust created by the measures of the Supreme Junta—Observations on the Cortes—Lord Wellington named Marshal General of the Lusitanian Forces—moves his army to the Coa—Defence of Gerona—Conduct of the Supreme Junta 220

CHAPTER VIII.

The French pass the Sierra Morena, and overrun every part of the Southern Provinces, except the Island of Leon—Dissolution of the Supreme Junta—a Regency appointed—Occurrences in Andalusia and Granada—Proceedings of the Regency and of the Intrusive Government—Preparations to expel the British from the Peninsula—General Junot reduces Astorga—General Bonnet occupies St. Ander and the Asturias—Military Operations in the Eastern Provinces—Public feeling in England—Decision to defend Portugal 262

CHAPTER IX.

Preparations for the Invasion and Defence of Portugal—Marshal Massena reduces Ciudad Rodrigo, and gains possession of Almeida—advances against Lisbon—is opposed and repulsed at Busaco—turns that Position—Lord Wellington falls back on his Lines—vainly courts an attack—The French retire into Cantonments—the English follow their movements—Marshal Massena sends to Paris, soliciting Reinforcements—Exertions of the Militia—Public feeling in France and England—Cortes of Spain assemble—nominate

another Regency—A combined force defeated in the attack of Frangerola—Military Events in Catalonia . . . 287

CHAPTER X.

Affairs of Portugal—Marshal Massena continues to receive Reinforcements—remains stationary in his Cantonments—a French force threatens the Alemtejo—Defensive Exertions of the Allies—a Reinforcement from England arrives at Lisbon—Marshal Massena retires—Sufferings of the French and Portuguese during the Invasion—Conduct of the Retreat and Pursuit—French attempt to halt behind the Coa—are attacked and driven into Spain—Almeida blockaded—Massena unites all the Force under his Command to raise the Blockade—is defeated in a General Action at Fuentes de Honor—retires beyond the Agueda—Garrison of Almeida evacuate the place . . . 326

CHAPTER XI.

Military Operations on the Alemtejo Frontier, in furtherance of the Conquest of Portugal—Marshal Soult takes Olivença—invests Badajos—disperses Mendizabal's army—Surrender of Badajos—Battle of Barrosa—Marshal Mortier reduces Campo-Mayor—Marshal Beresford forces the French to recross the Guadiana—retakes Olivença and besieges Badajos—Soult advances with an army to its relief—is defeated at Albuera—Second Siege of Badajos—French Armies of the North and South unite for its relief—The Allies retire into Portugal—offer Battle on the Caya—French Armies separate—Lord Wellington moves to the Agueda . . . 366



ERRATA IN VOL. I.

Page 221, line 16, *after* "Aranjuez," *insert* and threaten Madrid by
Fuente Dueñas.

— 233, line 10, *for* was *read* were.

— 253, line 24 *for* island *read* islands.

— 307, line 11, *for* after three days, *read* after a halt of three days.

ACCOUNT OF THE WAR
IN
SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

CHAPTER I.

Friendly Relations between Spain and France—Internal State of Spain—her severe Sufferings and Losses—Discontent of the People—The Prince of the Peace endeavours to make Spain assume an independent Attitude—Napoleon Buonaparte in consequence vows to supplant the Bourbon Dynasty by his own—Pretensions of the Buonaparte Family—Secret Treaty between the Rulers of France and Spain to partition Portugal—their combined Armies take Possession of Lisbon—A French Force admitted into the northern Provinces of Spain as Friends—Aggressive Demands of Napoleon—Popular Commotion at Aranjuez—Charles abdicates, and Ferdinand is proclaimed King—French Forces enter Madrid—Charles protests against his Act of Abdication—Buonaparte makes himself Arbiter between the Father and Son—cajoles the Royal Family to Bayonne—forces them to surrender their Rights, and sends them for Security into France.

SPAIN had been, for nearly a century, firmly attached to the interests of France, by the double tie of national alliance, and a family connection of the sovereigns, when the overthrow of the government in the latter country,

CHAP.
I.

CHAP. the expatriation of the nobles, the execution of
I. the king, and the ascendancy of the profligate
and unprincipled, severed every bond, and induced her in 1793 to join an extended confederacy of the European states to repress a convulsion which threatened the subversion of all order in the civilized world. Her offensive efforts proving unequal to the occasion, her armies were discomfited at every point; and in the second campaign, her frontier provinces being overrun by the republican levies, she concluded a treaty of peace with the Convention, followed, the ensuing summer, by an alliance offensive and defensive against England; from which period, under all the various changes of rulers in France, she never wavered in her fidelity, nor deemed any sacrifice too great to fulfil her engagements, and merit the good will of her ally.

In aid of a maritime war at variance with her vital interests, she saw, without a murmur, her fleets destroyed, her treasures drained, her commerce annihilated; and in 1801 ceded a valuable possession, to arrange the terms of a general pacification.

The tranquillity thus purchased might have enabled her to restore her finances, and recover her prosperity, had not France insisted on being paid a monthly subsidy of twenty-four millions of reals in lieu of active co-operation in the war, which, in 1803, recommenced with England.

Pecuniary aid being the most essential service CHAP. I.
 Spain could render France, in a struggle likely
 to be of long duration, the British cabinet, on
 ascertaining that such an engagement had been
 contracted, in order to prevent its fulfilment,
 intercepted and detained, in view of Cadiz, a
 squadron of frigates about to enter that port,
 freighted with treasure from Mexico. This vio- 5th Oct.
 lent act of undeclared hostility, aggravated by 1804.
 the unfortunate accident of the destruction of
 one of the vessels with its crew and passengers,
 could not be compromised, and a declaration of
 war by Spain was the consequence. Similar 12th Dec.
 losses and humiliation to those of the preceding
 contest followed; her ships were again swept off
 the ocean, her ports were again blockaded, and
 all communication with her colonies interrupted;
 still she continued faithful to her engagements:
 a strenuous attempt at reconciliation made by
 England was rejected, and for two years she
 freely sacrificed her dearest interests to the cause
 of France.

Charles IV., the monarch at that time sway- Internal
 ing the sceptre of Spain, naturally of a weak state of
 and indolent disposition, had for many years left Spain.
 the direction of affairs to an unprincipled favour- 1806.
 ite, Manuel Godoy, who, educated in the middle
 rank of society, and possessing no superior
 talents, had, at the early age of twenty-four,
 through the criminal attachment of the Queen,

CHAP. and blind partiality of the King, been raised to
 I.
 the highest dignity, and entrusted with the most
 1806. important office in the state. His ascendancy
 over the royal minds constantly increasing, he
 obtained, after a few years, a niece of his sove-
 reign in marriage, from which moment his pre-
 tensions knew no bounds; till at length, by ar-
 rogance and contumely, having driven from the
 public councils the Princes, the higher nobility,
 and all those most eminent for superior talents,
 or superior rectitude, he ruled despotically every
 department of the state.* Under his sway, the
 internal affairs of the country became as deplora-
 ble as its external relations. The navy, reduced
 to sixteen sail of the line in commission, was
 altogether inefficient from want of the most

* Don Manuel Godoy, born at Badajos in 1768, of a poor but noble family, was admitted into the royal guard, and obtained the favour of the Queen and King from his talents at singing and playing on the guitarre. Private gentleman of the guard in 1787, he was promoted to the rank of an officer in 1789, and rapidly passing through the inferior ranks, became, in 1791, at the age of 23, Adjutant-General of the guard, Major-General in the army, and decorated with the grand cross of the order of Charles III. In 1792 he was promoted to Lieutenant General, created Duke of Alcudia, and appointed principal Secretary of State, and knight of the Golden Fleece.

In 1795 created Prince of the Peace.

1797 married Donna Maria Teresa of Bourbon, niece of the King.

1800 General of the army against Portugal.

1801 Grand Admiral of Castile.

1802 Generalissimo by land and sea.

1807 Lord High Admiral of Spain and the Indies.

In 1798 Godoy resigned his official situation as principal Secretary of State, but continued to direct the affairs of the nation under the name of the King.

common stores for the equipment of the ships. CHAP.
 The army, nominally, 83,000 infantry, and I.
 18,000 cavalry, was almost in as bad a state from 1806.
 malversation and the embezzlement of the funds
 appropriated for its support; and the fortresses
 and coast defences were mouldering into decay
 from utter neglect. Created Prince of the Peace
 for concluding the treaty which rendered his
 country subservient to France, Godoy hesitated
 at no step, however unworthy, to give it perma-
 nence: indeed every thing was perverted to the
 furtherance of his private views: pensions were
 heaped on his idle dependents, whilst those in
 employment were unpaid; a profligate expendi-
 ture supported his interests at Madrid, and im-
 mense sums were for the same purpose remitted
 to Paris above the stipulated subsidy, till tax-
 ation and credit failed to supply his profusion;
 after which every fund, public and private, was
 arbitrarily seized, causing the ruin of thousands.
 In 1805 an epidemic ravaged the south, the crops
 failed in Castile, the maritime war precluded all
 external supply, and distress became so univer-
 sal, as to bring upon the favourite the hatred and
 execration of all classes, and to deprive Charles
 of the respect and affections of his people. At
 length, in 1806, the public discontent so openly
 manifested itself, that Godoy, fearing a popular
 commotion, formed the project of ridding Spain
 of the burthen of the French alliance, and restor-
 ing her to peace and independence; under

CHAP. which idea, in the autumn, when Prussia assumed an attitude hostile to France, he issued an ambiguous proclamation, calling on all loyal Spaniards to come forward with contributions, and rally in arms round their Sovereign.

I.

1806.

Proclamation of the Prince of the Peace. 5th Oct. App. 1.

This unexpected appeal to the patriotism and energies of the nation excited the utmost astonishment among all classes ; but, the motives and objects of it being involved in complete mystery, it produced no movement whatever. Indeed scarcely had the proclamation circulated over the distant provinces, when intelligence was received of the brilliant success of the French arms at Jena, which rendering the designs of the Prince of the Peace precarious, he hastened to countermand all his arrangements, and to assure his ally that the intended armament was a measure purely defensive against the Moors, who, instigated by England, were preparing to invade Andalusia.

Buonaparte determines to place his own family on the throne.

The Emperor Napoleon, being engaged in a contest of still doubtful issue, accepted the explanation as satisfactory ; but his personal jealousy of the Bourbons being heightened by a feeling of national distrust, he from that moment resolved on the deposition of Charles's family, and the substitution of his own on the throne of Spain and the Indies ; and immediately that the signature of the peace of Tilsit restored tranquillity to the north, and left the French troops free to act, he directed an army to assemble on

August, 1807.

the Garonne for that purpose. In the mean while, he publicly expressed his approbation of the conduct of the king of Spain, and treated the Prince of the Peace with every mark of regard. This duplicity enabled him to solicit the aid of an auxiliary force, which was granted without suspicion, and 13,000 of the choicest Spanish troops, under the Marquis de la Romana, were separated from the protection of their country, and marched into France.

CHAP.
I.
1807.

Napoleon Buonaparte, from the temporary appointment of First Consul of the French republic, had in eight years rendered the imperial diadem of France and the iron crown of Italy hereditary in his family; had conquered the throne of Naples for his elder brother; had converted the republic of Holland and the country adjoining Westphalia into kingdoms for two others; had deprived their possessors of Guastalla and Piombino, to form principalities for his sisters; had gained by treaty the grand dukedom of Berg for a brother-in-law, and the principalities of Neufchatel and Ponte Corvo for favourite marshals. These and other numerous acts of aggrandizement being patiently acquiesced in, a feeling was becoming general that the Buonaparte family was destined to unite all surrounding nations into one great confederacy subservient to France, and the government was successfully inculcating the belief that any political change which advanced that object was

Pretensions
of the Bu-
naparte
family.

CHAP. imperious: indeed, at this time, the annexation
I. to the empire of every desirable territory began
1807. to be openly avowed, and satisfactorily justified
to the French nation on that plea. With regard
to Spain, however, it could not be brought forward, as no change in the government was likely to render her a more devoted ally, and the minds of men were not yet sufficiently dazzled by the ascendancy of the imperial family, as to approve an act of barefaced injustice merely, for the personal gratification of its members. Nor would the imbecility of the monarch, and the misrule of the favourite, however strongly demanding an internal reform, justify, in the eyes of the world, the interference of a foreign power. Hitherto, no very unworthy political deed had sullied the reign of Napoleon; most of his spoliations had been the result of successful warfare or of open treaty; he had raised France to her commanding greatness by fair military skill and combination, under the character of repelling aggression, and had governed her with an attention to constitutional forms, unpractised by her kings. He had, consequently, much character to sustain in this new transaction; but, unfortunately for his future reputation, a vigilant police, and rigid censorship of the press, had liberated him from the salutary restraint imposed by consideration for the opinions of a free and enlightened public, and craft being the natural bias of his disposition, and en-

tering almost systematically into his designs and actions, he had recourse to it on this occasion. CHAP. I.

As the first step towards the execution of his scheme, and to lessen the odium of dethroning an unoffending Prince, he induced Charles, in the autumn of the year, through the secret agency of the Prince of the Peace, to conclude a treaty with France, conjointly to seize upon and partition Portugal into three principalities, to the exclusion of the Braganza family; one principality to be given in sovereignty to the favourite on the conclusion of peace with England, but till that event, the whole kingdom to be provisionally occupied by the troops of the two nations; the colonies to be equally divided between the contracting parties. 1807.

Treaty to
partition
Portugal.

Prelimina-
ries signed
16th Oct.

Definitive
27th Oct.

App. 2.

The country thus doomed to be blotted from the list of kingdoms, and to be despoiled of its foreign possessions, was, under the regency of John, Prince of Brazil, solely occupied in the pursuit of a peaceful and extended commerce, reposing her security on the honourable fulfilment of a treaty of neutrality, formally renewed by Buonaparte in 1804, which, though reciprocally advantageous, had burthened Portugal with the payment of an excessive annual contribution to France. Towards Spain she had, in the early periods of the war, proved herself a faithful ally, and the reigning families were connected by blood and a matrimonial union.

The proposed measure was consequently a

CHAP. total violation of honour and good faith, placing
I. the actors on a level, and affording Napoleon
1807. incalculable advantages in the prosecution of his
 meditated perfidies ; as the Spanish monarch, in
 becoming a party to such an engagement, de-
 prived himself of all appeal to the sympathy of
 Europe, and the Prince of the Peace, through
 the lure held out to his ambition, became a
 devoted instrument in his hands.

Proceed-
 ings conse-
 quent on
 the treaty.
 12th Aug.

The steps taken in fulfilment of the treaty
 were equally marked by deceit and injustice.
 In the middle of the summer, in order to create
 a pretext for quarrel or further extortion, a de-
 mand had been made by Napoleon, that the har-
 bours of Portugal should be closed against the
 ships of England, by the first day of September,
 and that all English subjects residing in Portugal
 should be imprisoned, and their property confis-
 cated, an embargo being at the same moment
 most unjustifiably laid on every Portuguese ves-
 sel in the ports of France and Holland. These
 demands were now repeated in the most peremp-
 tory style in the joint names of the two con-
 tracting sovereigns, under the threat of imme-
 diate hostilities in case of refusal.

15th.

16th Oct.

23d.

The Prince Regent, unable to resist such
 powerful dictators, and finding negociation fruit-
 less, submissively acquiesced in all their demands
 compatible with national honour, ordering every
 Englishman to quit his dominions, closing his
 ports on their commerce, and directing the march

of his troops to the coast to enforce his commands.—Without, however, waiting to ascertain the resolves of the Portuguese government, two days after the preliminaries of the treaty of partition were adjusted, and before their ratification, the advance of a French army of 25,000 infantry and 3000 cavalry crossed the Bidassoa, to carry its provisions into effect; and the flower of the Spanish army, to the amount of the stipulated contingent, was concentrated on different points to accompany its march.

CHAP.

I.

1807.

18th Oct.

At this moment, a schism in the royal family of Spain excited the surprise of Europe, and for a short time diverted public attention from the proceedings of the French. Ferdinand, Prince of the Asturias, being apprehensive that in the event of the death of his father, whose health was considered on the decline, the favourite, with whom he was in deadly enmity, might endeavour, by means of his high family connections and varied influence, to retain the powers of government in his hands, had throughout the summer been making arrangements to prevent it,* and courting the friendship of the Marquis de Beauharnais, the French ambassador, as a counterpoise. At the instigation of the latter, the prince was induced early in October to write to Napoleon, soliciting the honour of being permit-

Dissensions
among the
royal family
of Spain.

11th Oct.

* Among other acts, the prince gave a commission as Generalissimo with unlimited powers to the Duke del Infantado, to be in force from the moment of Charles's decease.

- CHAP. I.** ted to ally himself in marriage with the imperial family.* This demand was treated with silent indignity; but the transaction being discovered by Godoy it was made known to Charles in an anonymous communication, which imputed the most criminal motives to the Prince: in consequence Ferdinand was rudely arrested on the evening of the 28th October, in his apartments at the Escorial, his papers were seized, his friends thrown into prison, and himself denounced in the Court Gazette as guilty of high treason. The guards watching the palace were the same day doubled, additional troops were brought into the city, and such other precautionary measures taken as are usual at a moment of imminent danger. Charles was so persuaded of the existence of an organized conspiracy, that he instantly wrote to his ally Napoleon, communicating in terms of the bitterest anguish his irritated feelings at the unnatural conduct of his son, expressing his determination to exclude him from the succession, and soliciting the aid of his friend's advice as to the conduct of so delicate a proceeding. A week subsequently, however, on an examination of the papers seized, the transaction appearing in its true colours, and the
- 1807.**
- App. 3.**
- 30th Oct.**
- 29th.**
- 5th Nov.**

* "I conferred on this subject (the marriage) with the Count de Beaulharnais, through whom his Highness had received, on the part of the Emperor, some secret proposals." *Exposition of the Motives which engaged Ferdinand VII. to go to Bayonne, par Don Juan Escoiquez, Counsellor of State.*

Prince having addressed letters to his father and mother expressive of his contrition, and imputing his error to the bad councils of the Dukes of Infantado, San Carlos and others, the feelings of a parent resumed their sway, and a royal decree was promulgated for his enlargement from restraint, but directing his advisers to be tried by a commission of eleven members of the Council of Castile. These upright judges had the probity to declare them innocent of any treasonable intention; nevertheless, they were severally banished into different provinces by the arbitrary edict of the sovereign. Such, however, was the overpowering influence of Napoleon, that in the statement of this affair submitted to the public, no mention was permitted to be made of the letter addressed to him by Ferdinand, nor of the part borne by the French ambassador; so that the transaction passed altogether as a court intrigue, and served further to discredit the royal family in the public estimation.

General Junot, the commander of the French forces, whilst traversing Spain, held out the most flattering assurances of friendship towards Portugal, proclaiming his sole object to be the emancipation of the government from the yoke of England, to enable it to assert its own independence. Either deceived by this language, or to remove all pretext for the intruders crossing the frontier, the Regent, on the 5th November, ordered a full compliance with the mandate he

CHAP.

I.

1807.

5th Nov.

March of
General Junot
towards
Lisbon.

CHAP. had received, everywhere seizing the effects of
 I. the English, and putting under restraint the per-
 1807. sons of those who still lingered in the country.

In consideration of the intimate alliance so long subsisting between the two nations, and the dire necessity that drove the Regent to issue his former edict, it was not regarded by the British government in the light of a hostile proceeding; but they caused it at the time to be notified to Portugal, that any further act of submission to France would be treated as a declaration of war, and to give weight to the menace, a squadron under Sir Sydney Smith was sent to cruize off the Tagus. In consequence of this resolution Lord Strangford, the British envoy, on the appearance of the last mentioned decree, retired on board the admiral's ship; the port was strictly blockaded, and all Portuguese vessels captured. In this state of active hostility the two nations continued, the prince increasing in acts of rigour towards the English, till he found that no concession retarded the march of the French; that they had already entered Abrantes, and that they would soon appear before the capital.

Then, alarmed for his personal liberty, he meditated to withdraw from the scene, and endeavoured to open an amicable correspondence with the British envoy, who still remained on board the squadron. Every preparation was hastily completed for the removal of the court to the Brazils, and the design was communicated to the

people in a royal proclamation; but local attachments, the great age of the Queen, and a lingering hope that the invaders might still be appeased by submission, kept the Regent from taking any decisive step. At this period of wavering uncertainty, the precipitate and ill-judged declaration of Buonaparte, that the royal family of Portugal had forfeited the throne, most opportunely arrived to fix his resolves.* The Prince immediately named a council of Regency, and accompanied by the Queen with the junior members of the royal family, embarked on the following day, amidst a crowd of people, who lined the shore in a stupor of amazement, many shedding tears of regret, and all offering up fervent prayers for his safety: adverse winds, however, prevented his sailing till the 29th.—Lord Strangford had in the mean while been admitted to an audience, and having consigned to obli-
 vion the cessation of friendship so recently announced, the admiral permitted the free passage out of the river of eight sail of the line, four frigates, four corvettes and a numerous fleet of richly laden vessels, and also escorted the Prince to his American dominions.

CHAP.

I.

1807.

Royal family quit Portugal.

27th Nov.

27th.

29th.

The regular army of Portugal exceeded fifty-three thousand cavalry, infantry and artillery;

* In the *Moniteur* of the 12th November. The credit of its timely arrival is due to the Count de Funchal, who forwarded the decree to Lisbon by a vessel he caused to be hired at Fal-mouth, which made the passage in five days.

CHAP. and, if permitted to act, might readily have annihilated the invaders during their passage of the
 I. mountains of Beira; over which they marched
 1807. in three distinct columns, without artillery and in the most disorganized and deplorable condition: indeed, so much did the difficulties of crossing that rude and desolate tract surpass general expectation, that half of the troops sunk under the exertion, and being left on the road, were indebted for existence to the humanity of the natives.*

The Prince, however, deeming it impolitic to be the first to unsheath the sword, endeavoured, to the latest moment, to ward off the blow by negociation, and even on his departure commanded his subjects to receive the intruders as friends. The spirit of the people being from these causes compromised, all quietly submitted, and General Junot, at the head of a small advanced guard,† was amicably received into Lisbon on the 30th November; his troops continued to arrive in small detachments during the course of the following week till the 9th December, when being collected in sufficient

French army amicably admitted into Lisbon.

* Relation de l'Expedition du Portugal, faite en 1817 et 1808, par Le Baron Thiebault, Lieutenant General.—Page 51.

† Only 1500 fatigued troops, without a single cartridge in their possession. A considerable portion of the French army entered Abrantes so late as the 29th; the cavalry arrived there on the 1st and 2d December, and the artillery not till the 3d December. The main body marched from Alcantara, by Rosmaninal, Castello-branco, Sobreira, Cortisada, Santo-Domingo, to Abrantes.—Thiebault, pages 49 and 69.

numbers, they relieved the Portuguese guards, and assumed the military command of the city. In similar manner were Spanish columns, during the same period, admitted into Oporto and Setuval.

CHAP.
I.
1807.

The conduct of General Junot was at first temperate and politic: fully appreciating the peril of his situation in the midst of a spirited and patriotic people, whom he was cajoling out of their independence, and who might, if undeceived, readily overpower his weak and dispersed forces, he not only endeavoured, by renewed professions of friendly views, to soothe their feelings and allay their apprehensions; but also obtained from the Patriarch, the Inquisitor-general and most of the Bishops, pastoral addresses recommending quiet and obedience to his orders.

Conduct of
General Junot.

8th Dec.

These artifices, and the administration being carried on with the customary forms, procured a state of sullen tranquillity for some weeks, during which time the intrusive army was collected and re-organized, French garrisons were established in the fortified places, twelve thousand of the best of the native troops were marched into Spain under the Marquis de Alorna, the remainder disbanded, the population disarmed, and many of the most eminent or popular characters selected to proceed to France on a forced commission of compliment to Bu-

22d Dec.

CHAP. naparte. Then, despising all opposition, General

I.


1808.

Independence of
 Portugal
 annihilated.

Dated Milan, 23d
 Dec. 1807.

Junot threw aside dissimulation, and in the name of his master, on the 1st February, proclaimed “ the fate of Portugal is decided : its happiness for the future is assured, as Napoleon the Great has taken it under his all-powerful protection. The Prince of Brazil, in abandoning the country, has forfeited all his rights of sovereignty. The house of Braganza has ceased to reign over Portugal : the Emperor Napoleon wills that this fine country shall henceforth be governed entirely in his name by the General in Chief of his army.” At the same time he dissolved the Regency, and assuming the supreme power, every where displaced the insignia of Portugal by those of France. This act was accompanied by the promulgation of an imperial edict sequestering the estates of the royal family and of those who accompanied them, and imposing on the kingdom a contribution of one hundred millions of francs “ for the ransom of every kind of property belonging to individuals.”

The Spanish troops were thenceforward denied the slightest authority over the provinces allotted to them by the secret treaty, and the will of General Junot was made the supreme law throughout the country.—Previously, however, to mentioning the ruinous consequences of such unjust and arbitrary proceedings, it is necessary to narrate the contemporaneous events in Spain.

At the end of November, whilst every thing

was most perfectly tranquil throughout the Peninsula, Buonaparte, under pretext of supporting the armies in Portugal, notified to Charles that, in conformity with the secret convention, 40,000 of his troops would immediately enter Spain.— This suspicious proceeding of his ally, in taking an unfair advantage of their agreement to introduce an army into his kingdom, made Charles perceive the imprudence of having united with so powerful and so unprincipled a coadjutor, and he endeavoured to propitiate his favour by satiating his ambition; proposing, early in December, a matrimonial alliance between the Prince of Asturias, heir to the crown, and a female of the Buonaparte family. This offer being acceded to, in a letter from Milan, served for a time to tranquillize the apprehensions of the monarch, and influenced by his favourite, whose expectation of a sovereignty blinded him to the inevitable consequences of such conduct, he did all in his power to facilitate the intruder's obtaining the military command of the northern provinces of the kingdom, and his authority enabled the French commanders, by a combination of cunning, duplicity and force, to seize the four principal fortresses within the Pyrenees, viz. St. Sebastian, Pamplona, Figueras and Barcelona.* These were immediately strongly gar-

CHAP.

I.

1807.

Buona-
parte's pro-
ceedings to-
wards Spain.

1808.

His troops
received in
a friendly
manner.Violence
and perfid-
ies of the
French com-
manders.

* In proof of this statement, it is quoted from the History of the War published by order of Ferdinand VII., that General

CHAP. risoned, and as no arrangement was made on
 I. the frontier to ascertain the force of the different

1808. Armagnac, after being some time in the town of Pamplona, asked permission to lodge in the citadel two Swiss battalions of whose faith he pretended to have doubts, and being refused; contrived to obtain possession of that post by concealing, during the night, three hundred men in his own quarters, which were immediately opposite the gate of the citadel, where the issues of bread were made to the French by parties of thirty at a time: about eight in the morning the first party of thirty went as usual, and by talking to and amusing the Spanish guard, contrived to seize their arms: they then remained on the bridge till the 300 men from General Armagnac's house rushed in and obtained possession of the citadel, on the morning of the 17th February, 1807.

General Duhesme entered Catalonia by Junquera on the 4th January, without any previous notification, and was amicably received into the town of Barcelona: after some time he obtained permission to mount an equal number of men with the Spaniards on guard at the gate of the citadel: he then proclaimed that he had orders to march on Cadiz, and, as a preliminary, reviewed his troops on the esplanade of the citadel. During the review, on a preconcerted signal, the French kept at bay the Spanish half of the guard, whilst the troops under review ran in and overpowered the garrison, on the 28th February, 1807.

Alvarez, afterwards renowned for his defence of Gerona, commanded in Mont Juich, and having drawn up the bridge and threatened to fire on the French, a forged or real order from the government at Madrid was produced for their admittance, which being in due form, he felt obliged to obey it, on the 1st March.

General Thouvenot, under pretence of obtaining security for his sick and magazines, was admitted into the castle of San Sebastian on the 3d March, in opposition to the governor, by an order from the court.

divisions as they passed, additional troops were introduced at pleasure, and a disposable army formed of 70 or 75,000 men, which, under the command of Marshal Murat, was, in March, concentrated round Vitoria, in readiness, at the required moment, to enter Madrid, and prepare the subjugation of the whole Peninsula. The Spanish army, on the contrary, reduced to 43,000 infantry, and 12,000 cavalry, by the auxiliary corps in France and Portugal, and by a disproportioned force stationed in the Balearic Islands,* was divided into numerous garrisons and small detachments, so as nowhere to present a body capable of any serious resistance.

CHAP.
I.
1808.

To lull suspicion till the French troops had obtained firm footing in the country, Buonaparte treated Charles, personally, with flattering attention; sending him presents of valuable horses,

At Figueras a similar attempt, such as succeeded at Barcelona, was repulsed by the Spaniards drawing up the bridge, on the 16th March:—two days subsequently, on the demand of the French General, a body of refractory conscripts were admitted into the town for security, who, proving to be faithful soldiers in disguise, seized the gates, and let in a French regiment, on the 18th March.

* 10,600 infantry and

2400 cavalry in the north under the Marquis de la Romana.

21,000 infantry and

2400 cavalry, auxiliaries in Portugal.

8500 infantry and

1700 cavalry in the Balearic Islands.

CHAP. writing to him in the most friendly manner on
 I. the proposed union between their families, and
 1808. promising to visit him in person. Then having
 derived all the advantage he could expect from
 the influence of his credulous ally, he suddenly
 dropped the mask : assuming the language of a
 superior, and claiming Portugal as his own, he
 demanded that a secure military communication
 should be accorded to his armies, or that king-
 dom be received in exchange for an equivalent
 territory adjoining to France. In conferences
 between his ministers and Izquierdo, plenipo-
 tentiary of Spain, and confidential agent of the
 Prince of the Peace at Paris, it was proposed
 that the treaty of alliance between the two
 countries should be revised ; that Napoleon
 should be made a party to a fresh settlement
 of succession to the crown ; that the French
 should have the exclusive liberty of trading to
 the colonies on an equal footing with the
 Spaniards, with many similar sacrifices, proving
 the determination to reduce Spain to the con-
 dition of a vassal state ; and having impressed
 the agent with a belief that the sceptre could
 only be retained by Charles's family under such
 degrading concessions, that an amicable resigna-
 tion of his authority would be preferable, he
 was dispatched to Madrid in the beginning of
 March to communicate his feelings and his fears
 to his employer.

Buona-
 parte's ex-
 orbitant de-
 mands and
 pretensions.
 February.

This communication awakened the Prince of the Peace to a full sense of the imprudence he had counselled: he perceived that he had given his sovereign an inexorable master, who, admitting no personal consideration to interfere with the constantly growing projects of his insatiable ambition, would speedily drive him from the throne, when his own influence being no longer useful, he would also in his turn be sacrificed. Therefore, as the most probable means for Charles to retain the kingly dignity, and himself supreme power, he meditated the removal of the seat of government to Mexico, and to gain time, sent back Izquierdo with letters expressive of his readiness to acquiesce in all the wishes of Napoleon. Preparations for the departure of the court to Seville were then secretly completed, and instructions communicated to the Spanish commanders in Portugal to concentrate their forces on the same point. The royal family had assembled at Aranjuez, troops were collected for their escort, the determination of the king had been notified to his ministers, and the day for commencing the journey had arrived. The Prince of Asturias, however, considering Napoleon as favourable to his interests, decided not to follow in the train, and expressing that determination to an officer of his guard, it soon became public:*

CHAP.
I.
1808.

Charles meditates to escape beyond his power.

16th March.

Arrangements for his journey.
17th.

Public discontent.

* This occurrence is positively denied in the account of the

CHAP. amongst the people followed; the roads were
 I. thronged with armed parties throughout the night
 1808. to arrest the royal train, and even the troops showed
 themselves hostile to the measure. Charles, on
 being made acquainted with the strong disappro-
 bation expressed by all classes, relinquished the
 6 A. M. undertaking and disavowed the intent, and the
 18th. same day, alarmed at the violence of a tumultu-
 Tumults. ous assembly of the people in the environs of
 his palace, directed against the Prince of the
 Peace, who was known to be the chief promoter
 of the meditated journey, he dismissed him from
 Charles dis- the employment of generalissimo, and published
 misses his his resolve to take upon himself the personal
 favourite. command of his forces. This concession led to
 his own deposition: for the party hostile to the
 favourite, emboldened by the insurrectionary
 19th. movements which were repeated with increased
 violence on his losing his authority, threw him
 into a dungeon; then, taking advantage of the
 general discontent of the nation and of the ab-
 Abdicates. sence of his counsellor, they drew from Charles
 the resignation of his crown, on the evening of
 the 19th March, and instantly declared the
 Prince of Asturias King Ferdinand VII.

Council of
 Castile.

The only semblance of a constitutional body

transaction published at Madrid, in 1818, under the auspices
 of Ferdinand VII. It was, however, stated at the time on such
 respectable authority, that it has not been deemed right to
 reject it.

in Spain presiding over public affairs, is the council of Castile : that assembly, intended as a check on the authority of the monarch at intervals when the Cortes were not assembled, was composed originally of princes and nobles, who took their seats by right of birth or title, and acted as a sort of privy council. At a later period, it was made a judicial body, and since the disuse of the Cortes has succeeded to most of its duties, but without the same claim to public confidence, the monarch exercising the sole privilege of naming or displacing the members at his pleasure. Notwithstanding this dependance on the royal favour, the Council of Castile, on receiving an official communication that Charles had abdicated, resolved with becoming dignity not to give the act their sanction, until the highest law-officers of the government should have pronounced an opinion on the legality of the proceeding. The vicinity of the French troops, however, rendering delay dangerous to the public tranquillity, the new sovereign transmitted his commands to the council on the 21st, instantly to publish the abdication, which was accordingly done, without waiting for the formalities they intended should accompany so momentous a decision.

The notification was received with universal satisfaction, and the public exultation knew no bounds, when an order followed for bringing to

CHAP.

I.

1808.

The favour-
ite Godoy
ordered to
be tried.

CHAP. trial Manuel Godoy, Don Diego his brother,
 I. and eight of the principal instruments of his
 malversations.
 1808.

French
troops enter
Madrid.

Marshal Murat instantly availed himself of the pretext afforded by the commotions at Aranjuez, to advance with his army and gain military possession of Madrid, which he accomplished on the 23d* under the express assurance that his intention was to continue his march on Cadiz, after the halt of a day or two, and that tranquillity should be perfectly restored. Ferdinand, on the following morning, made his public entry into the capital, where he was greeted with tumultuous joy by all classes; and as sovereign, received the homage of the nobility and constituted authorities of the State. Marshal Murat, however, declined joining in any act of public respect or open acknowledgment of the prince: at the same time he held equivocal language to the Spanish ministers, declaring that he was actuated solely by a friendly desire to heal the divisions in the council, and give support to the lawful government; but that it was necessary, before he took an open part, to

24th March.

Duplicity
of Marshal
Murat.

* March route of Murat's Head Quarters from Aranda.

19th, Somosierra.

20th, Buitrago.

21st, St. Augustin.

22d, Alcobendas.

23d, Madrid.

know the decision of the Emperor respecting the recent change, who, he asserted, would in less than ten days be within the Spanish frontier.

CHAP.
I.
1808.

Charles communicated by letter to Napoleon his voluntary resignation of the crown, on the day after the event, and Ferdinand also notified to him his accession to the throne. This double confidence certainly gave Napoleon a right of offering his advice, or even, perhaps, on any difference between the parties, of pressing his mediation. It is, however, unnecessary, in an account of the war, to discuss that point at length, or to enter into a particular inquiry whether Charles's abdication was voluntary or constrained, it being a question of internal regulation, affecting the members of the state alone.

20th Mar.

Ferdinand, once acknowledged King by the nation, it is most clear that no foreign power had a shadow of right to interfere, and thenceforth, in viewing the contest between Buonaparte and the Spaniards, the errors and the weakness of the former reign should be forgotten, and the cause of the new sovereign judged on his own acts alone. So considered, it must be pronounced the most decidedly just that ever drew an appeal to the sword. Every other circumstance was unfavourable to Ferdinand, and fearful were the odds against which he had to contend; superior cunning was aided

CHAP. by superior force, and scenes of arrogance and

I.
~~~~~

1808.

perfidy were exhibited on the one side, only to be equalled by those of weakness and simplicity on the other.—Of this, one of the first occurrences of his reign affords a striking example. Ferdinand having announced to his people that the change in the government was effected with a design more strictly to cement the alliance between the French and Spanish nations, Murat thereupon craftily expressed a desire to receive as a mark of that increased friendship, the sword of Francis taken at Pavia in 1525, which the Spaniards preserved with the utmost veneration, fondly regarding it as a proud trophy of their former greatness.—The Prince not only hastened to comply, but made a merit of the act, and sent the sword on the 4th of April with great pomp and ceremony to the French head-quarters ; thereby lowering his own dignity, and outraging the feelings of his people, at a moment when destruction could only be avoided by cherishing both.

Demand  
made for  
the sword  
of Francis ;

its delivery.

Ferdinand, notwithstanding this too conciliatory conduct, was far from betraying the trust reposed in him, and his elevation to the throne totally deranged the plot carrying on for its subversion, even rendering necessary a fresh system of artifice and deception. Napoleon, disappointed in the expectation of accomplishing his designs through the influence of the Prince

Napoleon  
goes to  
Bayonne.  
2d April.

of the Peace, left Paris two days after receiving intelligence of the change, to approach the scene, and be convenient personally to direct his intrigues. In the mean while, Charles had been persuaded by the agency of a French general officer, secretly to sign a protest against his act of abdication as constrained, to appeal by letter to Buonaparte for support, and place himself under the protection of the French troops. Murat also urged the Prince of Asturias to submit his cause to the same arbitrator, representing the Emperor as his friend, and actually on the road to pay a visit of compliment and conciliate the interests of France with those of his faithful ally; but still artfully excusing himself from styling him King until the public acknowledgment of his sovereignty. — French officers and couriers, reported to bring intelligence of the progress of the Emperor, daily entered Madrid, till, at length assurances of his having crossed the frontier were so positively given by Marshal Murat and the ambassador, that the Infant Don Carlos was dispatched on the 5th of April to Tolosa, to receive him, when he was scarcely beyond the walls of Paris. Immediately afterwards, it was suggested to Ferdinand by the same agents, that a similar attention on his part would prove highly gratifying to his august visitor. These insinuations were supported by the favourable sentiments

CHAP.

I.

1808.

Charles protests against his act of abdication.  
21st Mar.

dated 23d Mar.  
App. 4.

Buonaparte's approach to Madrid announced.

CHAP. of the majority of the Spanish council, who,  
 I. acquainted with the pretensions of Napoleon,\*  
 1808. had the incredible weakness to believe that argument and an appeal to his conscience would turn him from his purpose. The measure was in consequence decided, and on the arrival of an  
 7th April. envoy, General Savary, to announce Buonaparte's approach, and to assure Ferdinand of his intention to recognize him as King, should his policy towards France be the same as that of his predecessor, the Prince, having arranged a council of government† under the presidency of his uncle, Don Antonio, proceeded on the 10th of April to Burgos, to meet his expected visitant, and from thence was persuaded by other false statements of his approach to go forward to Vitoria.—Not finding Buonaparte in that city, he could not but suspect the snare to obtain possession of his person.—Don Joseph Herbas, brother-in-law of one of Buonaparte's ministers, and two other noblemen, gave him full information on that head. The Duke of Mahon, Captain General of Guipuscoa, and the Chief

Ferdinand  
 persuaded  
 to meet him  
 on the road.

\* By the lucky accident of a dispatch from Izquierdo at Paris, dated the 24th of March, addressed to the Prince of the Peace, arriving after his fall, and being delivered to the new ministry.

† Composed chiefly of the Secretaries of State and royal Counsellors, with the Dean, Procurador, and four members of the council of Castile.



of the Revenue Guard, severally offered to cover his flight into Aragon; various individuals proposed secret modes of evasion, and the citizens so clearly saw the danger to which he was about to expose himself, that they rose to prevent his departure, but now, closely environed by French troops, it was deemed by his counsellors too hazardous to retreat; therefore, after a communication with Buonaparte by means of the envoy, although the letter received from him in answer was of a most ambiguous nature, and expressed his intention of making strict inquiry into the circumstances of the abdication before he gave it his sanction, Ferdinand extended his journey to Bayonne. On his arrival on the 20th at noon, Buonaparte received him in person with every mark of respect, and throughout the day treated him with the attention generally limited to the intercourse between sovereigns, making him dine at the same table, afterwards attending him to his carriage, and on parting embracing him with warmth. Scarcely, however, had the Prince entered his own apartments, when General Savary, the envoy whose unblushing falsehoods had served to inveigle him forward, arrived to notify the determination of Napoleòn, that the Bourbon dynasty should thenceforth cease to reign in Spain, and requiring him instantly to sign his abdication of the crown.

Ferdinand, in this extremity, supported by

CHAP.

I.

1808.

16th April.

Is inveigled on to Bayonne.

Buonaparte receives him with kindness;

the same day demands the immediate cession of his crown;

**CHAP.** some intrepid counsellors, evinced becoming  
 1  
 1808. firmness, and refused compliance ; amicable ne-  
 negotiations were in consequence opened, and the

is firmly re-  
 sisted.

petty kingdom of Etruria, taken by the secret  
 treaty from a member of the family, offered as  
 an equivalent for Spain and the Indies,—this  
 was unanimously rejected by the council as in-  
 adequate, nor could menaces nor flattery shake  
 their fidelity. Napoleon himself in vain exerted  
 his talents and influence in controversy ; his  
 most forcible arguments about the interests of  
 his system of policy, of his family, and his  
 empire, were constantly met by a simple appeal  
 to the unalterable principles of honour, justice,  
 and good faith ;\* till finding that the minds of  
 the negociators were not sufficiently enlightened  
 to appreciate the advantage of their country  
 being included in his grand system of policy,  
 he ordered them to be exchanged for others.  
 This produced no effect, as they also steadily re-  
 sisted any compromise ; whereupon it became  
 necessary to alter the whole scheme, to bring for-  
 ward the protest, deny the validity of the abdi-  
 cation, and provisionally reinstate Charles, from  
 whom, through the influence of the favourite,  
 whose life being made a pledge for his co-ope-  
 ration, the cession would readily be obtained.

Changes his  
 scheme.

Marshal Murat had been instructed, as a  
 branch of the original plot, to obtain posses-

\*. Escoiquez.

sion of the person of Godoy, immediately after the departure of Ferdinand from Madrid ; on which occasion, to insult the government and evince his determination not to be refused, he substituted a military requisition for the usual forms of diplomacy between independent states, and through the chief of his Staff sent a written demand for the person of the Prince of the Peace, founded on the assertion that Charles and Ferdinand had rendered Buonaparte arbiter of his fate : adding the assurance that the intention was to remove him from Spain, to prevent the public from supposing he influenced the councils of Charles, whom he thus notified Napoleon only acknowledged as king. Fraud being backed by force, the council of government, contrary to the express commands of Ferdinand, relinquished the custody of Godoy ; and Murat, on the 20th of April, delivering him from the prisons of Villa-viciosa and the just revenge of an injured people, sent him to Bayonne, to be made a further instrument in the abasement of his country. The abdicated Monarch with the Queen willingly followed, and, on a stipulation for kind treatment to their favourite, consented to aid in the deposition of their son and the downfall of their family.

CHAP.

I.

1808.

obtains the  
release of  
Godoy ;

20th April.

sends him  
to BayonneCharles and  
the Queen  
follow.

24th Apr.

On their arrival on the 30th of April, Ferdinand was deprived of all the honours of sove-

CHAP. reigny, and treated as a rebel by his father,  
 I. who demanded the immediate return of his  
 1808. crown, or that otherwise, supported by Napo-  
 leon, he would cause him to be punished as an  
 usurper. The Prince, in this extremity, was  
 advised, as a means of procuring his freedom, to  
 offer to make the cession at Madrid, in presence  
 of a general assembly of the Cortes, or other  
 authorities of the State.—This mode of pro-  
 ceeding, being virtually an appeal to the na-  
 tion, did not accord with the views of Napoleon,  
 and menaces and persecutions of every nature  
 were continued throughout the following day,  
 to induce Ferdinand unconditionally to re-  
 nounce his right to the crown. These were as  
 firmly resisted by the Prince as arguments had  
 been by his ministers ; but considering his cause  
 desperate, as far as depended on justice or good  
 faith, he secretly dispatched instructions to the  
 council of government to convoke the Cortes,  
 and commence hostilities against the intruders.  
 —Scarcely, however, had the messenger left  
 Bayonne, when intelligence was received of an  
 event which hastened the plot to a conclusion;  
 and from that moment Ferdinand's conduct  
 ceased to pourtray either dignity or common  
 resolution.

The Spaniards, whose ideas of Buonaparte's  
 character were entirely drawn from the false

colouring of a servile press, considered him a high-minded, magnanimous hero; and believing his interference intended merely to correct the abuses of the Favourite, and renovate the exertions of the state, at first received his troops favourably, and long continued to treat them with kindness; but tranquil and contented under the mild sway of the Bourbon princes,\* they immutably connected the interests of Ferdinand with their own, and though little suspecting the extent of the meditated perfidy, felt dissatisfied and alarmed at the departure of the royal family. Their national pride was wounded by the haughty and violent conduct of the French

CHAP.  
I.  
1808.

State of the  
public mind  
in Spain.

\* The despotism of a single man, short of the power of life and death, is little felt or considered by the multitude, and in Spain it perhaps even contributes to their welfare, as the nobles, constantly chained to the court, have not learned to exact the utmost value of their property, and the cultivators of their immense landed possessions flourish in ease, the number of which, added to those thriving under the beneficent administration of the extensive domains of the church, form a considerable portion of the tenantry of the country. The impositions are light, as must always be the case under a despotism not military; representative governments alone being able to oppress by taxation without an armed support. The Spanish cultivators thus favoured, are aided by a peasantry well clothed, lodged, and fed, forming a particularly cheerful, independent class of beings, from which sprang the guerrillas, and those hardy soldiers, whose patience and constancy under the severest sufferings arising from neglect and privation, enabled Spain so constantly to re-organise her armies after complete defeat.

CHAP. commander, and their personal feelings irritated  
 I. by the growing insolence of the soldiery. De-  
 1808. prived of their Sovereign, and deserted by the  
 nobles, they felt themselves betrayed, and that  
 personal exertion alone could bring them relief.  
 These feelings, worked upon by a thousand  
 sinister rumours, believed and repeated without  
 examination, caused a general agitation at Ma-  
 drid, which threatened, on the slightest incident,  
 to break into open insurrection.

The intruders, on their part, were highly de-  
 sirous of an opportunity to evince their supe-  
 riority, and, by a terrible example, to strike a  
 salutary terror, and crush in the bud the rising  
 spirit of the people. To be prepared for such  
 an occurrence, 15,000 troops, with several bri-  
 gades of artillery, were posted in advantageous  
 posts within the town or on the heights over-  
 looking it, and 7,000 others were collected at  
 the Casa del Campo in its immediate vicinity.—  
 Under these circumstances the most trifling  
 event became subject of discord, and a slight  
 popular movement on the 2d of May led to an  
 extended massacre.

Tumult at  
 Madrid.

Buonaparte, considering that his usurpation  
 would be incomplete whilst any member of the  
 royal family remained without his grasp, ordered  
 the Queen of Etruria, daughter of Charles IV.,  
 and her infant son, to be conveyed to France.  
 At the moment of their departure from the

palace, the agitated feelings of those round the carriage induced them to impede its progress, and insult the French officer in charge of the escort, who, to enforce his authority, made his men fire on and disperse the crowd, killing or maiming several. A knowledge of this outrage spread in a moment all over Madrid, and the entire population poured into the streets, armed with whatever weapons they could find, to avenge their slaughtered countrymen, overpowering and disarming several of the French guards. Murat lost not a moment in bringing up his whole force, and wherever resistance was offered, carried destruction through every quarter of the town. The Spanish military were retained in their barracks by the officers; and some artillerymen, posted at the arsenal gate, were the only troops that attempted to aid the people. The members of government and of the public bodies, from the commencement of the tumult, actively interposed between the parties, and by their personal exertions saved many lives;\* the firing nevertheless continued for two hours till

CHAP.  
I.  
1808.

\* In the street of Alcala forty-five harmless Catalan traders were on the point of being shot, when Ofarril and some members of the government arrived at the spot, and assuring the French officers that to carry arms was a privilege granted to the Catalan merchants by the laws of the kingdom, and was moreover their general usage, they were prevailed upon to arrest the musquets of the executioners.

CHAP. not a Spaniard appeared abroad. When sub-  
 I.  
 mission was by this means enforced, a procla-  
 1808. mation was issued, assuring amnesty and obli-  
 vion for the past, confiding in which, the citizens  
 resumed their occupations; but soon afterwards  
 detachments of troops swept the streets, making  
 prisoners of all who had not the good fortune  
 to find a place of refuge; and Murat, the  
 same evening and next morning, shot, by sen-  
 tence of a French commission, the most ob-  
 noxious of those who, by this breach of faith,  
 had fallen into his power. Thus perished, by  
 military execution, above one hundred and fifty  
 Spanish citizens, victims to an experiment of  
 the effects of coercion and terror, in procuring  
 the quiet submission of a nation to a change of  
 rulers.

Execution  
 of the pri-  
 soners.

The number that suffered in the affray is in-  
 volved in considerable doubt; most Spaniards  
 assert that 10,000 bled or fell, few admit the  
 amount to have been under 5,000, though occa-  
 sionally a dispassionate Castilian is met with  
 who reduces it to 3,000. In a report published  
 at the moment,\* by the French government,  
 the number was vaguely stated at some thou-  
 sands of the lowest order; but subsequently,  
 when it was deemed politic to soothe the Spa-

Number  
 that suffered  
 in the  
 affray.

\* Moniteur, 11th May,



niards and gloss over the transaction, a statement was drawn up by the council of Castile and made public at Madrid by order of Marshal Murat, which reduced the number *ascertained* to have been killed, wounded, and missing, to one hundred and ninety-three. Between statements so much at variance, it is difficult to form a judgment of the truth; but much inquiry amongst those who witnessed the events of the day leads to the belief that, if the number in the original report be greatly exaggerated, it is also in the latter considerably understated.

CHAP.

I.

1808.

This opposition of the people to the French troops, made Napoleon feel the necessity of some immediate arrangement of the government; at the same time, the ease with which the commotion was repressed, and the perfect tranquillity that followed, served to convince him of his power to enforce his will, and emboldened him to cut short his intrigues. On the arrival of a courier on the evening of the 5th, announcing the re-establishment of order, he went in person to the residence of the old monarch, and Ferdinand, being desired to attend, was reproached as having occasioned the tumult by his obstinacy; the guards were trebled all round Bayonne to prevent his escape, or communicating with his friends, and he was treated in every respect as a captive: stigmatized as illegitimate by his mother, vilified and threatened by his father,

Effect of the  
tumult on  
Napoleon.

Threats and  
menaces  
used to in-  
timidate  
Ferdinand.

**CHAP. I.** and in the power of an antagonist who had pronounced the alternatives of submission or death,\* the Prince was compelled to make an unconditional surrender of his rights, and to restore the crown to Charles; who immediately afterwards, by a written treaty, made a cession of it to Buonaparte, having, to ensure the quiet transfer of his subjects, previously delegated the powers of Lieutenant of his kingdom to Marshal Murat; commanding the Council of Government, the Captains-general of Provinces, and all minor authorities, implicitly to obey his orders.

**1808.** The other members of the royal family shortly afterwards joined in the act of renunciation, and, as far as their individual interests were concerned, rendered Napoleon legal possessor of the throne:—Don Antonio and Don Carlos even proceeding a step farther, and joining with Ferdinand in a written address to the people, absolving them from their allegiance, and ex-

**Ferdinand submits.**

**5th May.**

**Charles cedes his rights to Napoleon.**

**4th May.**

**The royal family ratify the deed.**

**Dated Bourdeaux 12th May.**

\* In these conferences, expressions were used to the Prince, so disgusting and humiliating that I dare not repeat them.—*Cevallos*. The Queen said, “I tell you to your face that you are my son, but not the son of the King.” The anger of the father and the fury of the mother were so outrageous as to give cause to apprehend personal violence, and make those present regard such unnatural parents with horror.—The Queen pressing intreated the Emperor to send Ferdinand to the scaffold, and Napoleon supported her threats by saying, “Prince, il faut opter entre la cession et la mort.”

horting every one to conform cheerfully to the new order of things.

CHAP.

I

1808.

Sent into  
security.

The principal victims of Buonaparte's superior cunning then vanished from the scene.—Charles went into retirement at Compiègne, on an ill-paid pension,\* and Ferdinand, with his brother Don Carlos, was securely guarded in the château of Valencey.† Whilst a sentiment of pity is bestowed on the fate of the misguided father and the credulous son, every one must rejoice that the worthless Godoy met with his full share of disappointment and humiliation; not only the promised sceptre vanished from his grasp, but his enormous and ill-acquired wealth being confiscated in support of the patriots' cause, he became dependent for the means of existence on the bounty of the monarch whose confidence he had abused, and whose family he had involved in ruin.

Notwithstanding that the transactions which thus ended in the deposition and captivity of the royal family of Spain passed within the French territory, Buonaparte was able, by means

\* The yearly pension to Charles of three millions of reals (twenty to the dollar) and that of 400,000 francs to each of the Infants, were subsequently reduced to one-fourth of those amounts.

† A country-house belonging to Mons. Talleyrand, Prince of Benevente, situated in the Department of the Indre, five leagues from Lorcux.

CHAP. of his police and censorship of the press, to prevent any just idea of them being formed: at this  
I.  
1808. period he published the leading particulars, suppressing some parts and falsifying others, to give a colour of justice and free-will to the treaty of cession, and prepare the public mind for the proceedings he meditated to ground upon it, which will be narrated in the succeeding chapter.

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## CHAPTER II.

*Marshal Murat makes himself acknowledged President of the Junta of Government—The Spaniards remain quiet in anxious Suspense—perceive the Danger that threatens them—simultaneously rise against the Intruders—apply to England for Assistance—State of the Contest between England and France—England embraces with ardour the Cause of the Patriots—Napoleon convokes a National Assembly at Bayonne—names his Brother Joseph, King of Spain—acknowledged by most of the Dignitaries of the Church and State—Military Exertions of the Patriots in the South—one of their Armies completely dispersed at Medina del Rio Seco—Joseph triumphantly enters Madrid—French Corps under General Dupont surrenders to the Patriots—the Intruders concentrate behind the Ebro—Defence of Zaragossa—The Marquis de la Romana effects the Escape of his Army—The Formation of a supreme Government decided.*

**M**ARSHAL Murat, on receiving his commission from Charles as Lieutenant of the kingdom, assumed the post of President of the junta of government; and finding the Council of Castile inclined to deliberate on the respective claims of the father and son, sent them an order instantly to register the re-establishment of the former, and circulate his proclamation to that effect, which being obeyed on the 10th of May, he thenceforward swayed all their resolves with dictatorial authority. Awe of his power and violence rendered null the commands transmit-

CHAP.  
II.  
1808.

Murat becomes President of the Council of Government.  
8th May.

CHAP. II. 1808. ted by Ferdinand to the Council, to convoke the Cortes and commence hostilities; for although known to every member individually, not one had ventured to propose their being taken into consideration, when a confidential messenger, dispatched on Ferdinand's resignation of the crown, arrived to solicit their suppression, lest the consequences might be fatal to him and his brothers; and in Aragon only, warlike preparations commenced under sanction of Ferdinand's authority.\*

The inhabitants of the capital, overawed by a strong garrison, remained perfectly tranquil, after the severe chastisement of their efforts on the 2d of May; and the causes which gave rise to that severity being misrepresented, in various addresses to their countrymen by the councils of government and Inquisition, it produced no sensation in the provinces beyond silent and deadly hatred of allies, whose presence had occasioned such proceedings; a sullen calm pervaded the country for many days subsequently, every one anxiously awaiting the result of the interference of Buonaparte, drawing a hope from the know-

\* The Marquis of Palafox, charged with the original orders from Ferdinand, found means, on the road, to communicate them to his brother Joseph Palafox, at Zaragossa, who immediately began to arm the Aragonese, and neither the orders of the Council nor those of Joseph Buonaparte's ministers could make him desist.

ledge of his power, and a belief in his magnanimity. A proclamation issued on the 20th of May, formally to announce that Charles and Ferdinand had abdicated in favour of the Emperor Napoleon, first raised a suspicion that the subjugation of the peninsula was the object of the passing scene. Shortly afterwards, when it became known that a corps of 12,000 men under Marshal Moncey, and another of 18,000 under General Dupont, were marching on Valencia and Cadiz, to secure possession of those important places, the Spaniards fully perceived their danger. Then the views of Murat in carrying to such an extreme the outrageous massacre at Madrid became evident; the details of that event, exaggerated beyond all bounds, spread rapidly from mouth to mouth; the idea of being bayoneted into submission, roused the pride of every Spaniard; an expression of general indignation and a determined spirit of resistance manifested itself throughout the peninsula; each province, not occupied by the French, separately took up arms—Valencia on the 23d, the Asturias on the 24th, Andalusia on the 26th, Aragon on the 27th, Estramadura and Galicia on the 30th of May. The most audacious or enterprising citizens of the several capitals, without any communication with their neighbours, formed themselves into a local junta of government, and without calculating their own strength,

CHAP.

II.

1808.

The Spaniards remain quiet in anxious suspense;

perceive their danger.

Each province takes up arms.

CHAP. or that of the intruders, boldly declared against  
 II. the usurper.

1808.

Conduct of  
 the magis-  
 trates and  
 citizens.

4th and 5th  
 June.

Under these unparalleled circumstances, the royal governors and civil magistrates, without instructions for their conduct, were placed in situations of peculiar difficulty.—Some warmly espoused the popular cause; others sheltered themselves under a prudent neutrality, and a few actively exerted their authority to maintain the order of affairs, as entrusted to them. Of the latter, above thirty were sacrificed to the undistinguishing fury of the populace,\* and at Valencia, besides the governor, the French residents to the number of three hundred and twenty-five were massacred by a lawless mob, which for some days, under a canon of St. Isidro, set at defiance the authority of the civic junta: otherwise no excesses attended these spontaneous movements of the people; everywhere a spirit of moderation and order being upheld and encouraged by eloquent proclamations, inculcating the purest doctrines of liberty, whilst they cherished and matured the sudden blaze of

\* The most distinguished persons who suffered were the Counts Torre del Fresno and Aquila; the Marquis of Socorro, Generals Borja, Saavedra, Truxillo, and Cevallos. The Intendants of Salamanca and Cuença, and the Alcaldes of Reinosa, Jaen, Carolina and Talavera were also murdered. General Filangieri, Governor of Corunna, being mistaken for a Frenchman, was assassinated at Villa-franca, whilst travelling out of Galicia after having resigned his command.



active patriotism. The junta of Seville took the lead in these proceedings, styling themselves the supreme government of Spain and the Indies; but the first communication made to England, was on the 9th June, by deputies from the Asturias.

CHAP.  
II.

1808.

At this period, war between England and France had, with one short interval of repose, raged for fifteen years, and although the navy of Britain had early swept the seas, and annihilated the commerce of France, that empire was yearly improving in its resources and extending its sway. Repeated coalitions of the surrounding states, formed with the view of checking her growth, had ended in the ruin of their members, and the aggrandisement of her territory, till England at length found herself singly opposed to a power of such colossal strength and magnitude, as almost to limit her hopes of a successful issue of the struggle to persevering resistance and the chance of events. The patriotism of the inhabitants of these islands, presenting the imposing spectacle of a nation enrolled in arms and determined to sacrifice every thing in defence of their liberties and laws, added to the triumphs of the navy, had set the question of invasion at rest; and Napoleon, finding England impervious to his arms, had, for some time past, turned his exertions to the destruction of her finances by drying up the sources of her commercial prosperity,

State of the  
contest be-  
tween Eng-  
land and  
France.

CHAP. In the delirium of success, soon after entering  
II. the capital of the Prussian monarchy, he de-  
1808. creed the British isles to be in a state of block-  
Nov. 1806. ade; that all vessels trading to them should be  
considered lawful prizes, and further that all  
vessels met with at sea, not having a certificate  
from a French consul at the port of shipment,  
that the cargo was not of British produce or  
7th Jan. manufacture, should be captured. This decree  
1807. was immediately retaliated on France by a re-  
Nov. 1807. gulation, subjecting to seizure all neutral vessels  
carrying on the coasting trade of the continent,  
and subsequently by an Order in Council, de-  
claring all France, and her dependent kingdoms,  
to be in a state of blockade, and ordering all  
neutral vessels trading directly with them to  
be captured; further declaring all vessels having  
certificates from any French consul on board to  
be lawful prizes; and lastly, insisting on all ves-  
sels going to France, touching previously at a  
British port, as also when carrying a cargo from  
France to any other country; and in some cases  
to pay a transit duty to England. This severe  
retaliation was succeeded by a still more vio-  
Dated Mi- lent rejoinder on the part of Napoleon, declaring  
lan, 17th every vessel visited by an English ship at sea, or  
Dec. 1807. having paid any duty in England, denationalized,  
and ordered it as English property to be seized  
wherever met: further declaring England in a  
state of blockade by sea and land, and directing  
every vessel to be captured, sailing from any

active patriotism. The junta of Seville took the lead in these proceedings, styling themselves the supreme government of Spain and the Indies; but the first communication made to England, was on the 9th June, by deputies from the Asturias.

CHAP.  
II.  
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State of the  
contest be-  
tween Eng-  
land and  
France.

CHAP. of sentiment on the policy of repealing certain  
 II. restrictions laid on our catholic brethren at the  
 1808. reformation, had prevented many of the principal characters in the country from uniting to form a powerful administration; and the conduct of affairs was left in the hands of men, who, however solid or brilliant their talents, were not regarded by the bulk of the nation as their natural leaders in such a season of difficulties, so that the political horizon presented, under every view, a most cheerless prospect of the future.

England  
 cordially  
 aids the pa-  
 triots.

15th June.

The popular movement in Spain was rapturously hailed by all parties as the dawn of a new era: it seemed suddenly to break the potent spell which surrounded us, and to give a most favourable opening for the renewal of our military exertions and commercial industry. No sooner did the Asturian deputies represent the feelings of the Spanish people, and their determination to resist to the utmost the aggressions of Buonaparte, than friendship and alliance were established between the two nations without discussion of terms. Every Englishman felt personally interested in their cause, and all party-views being suspended, the most popular senators in eloquent harangues, urged the government to immediate action and the utmost liberality. Private donations rivalled in amount the public munificence; and money, arms, am-

munition, clothing and stores were supplied with a generosity surpassing the most sanguine hopes of the patriots. Military agents were immediately accredited to the different juntas, to distribute these offerings, and to establish a mutual co-operation between them and England; and five thousand troops previously embarked in transports under Major General Spencer were ordered to Gibraltar Bay, to enable the governor of that fortress to aid the patriots in the defence of the South, till a plan of more extended operations should be decided.

CHAP.  
II.  
1808.

Every account received from Spain, afforded fresh hope of permanency to the change, from the wisdom of the measures pursued. The local governments, which were originally composed of ambitious or daring men only, after a time, added to their numbers many persons of the greatest weight or rank in their respective provinces, and many liberal and enlightened magistrates and priests. Then apparently animated with the purest spirit of liberty, each junta vied with the others in decrees in favour of general liberty, with such effect, that in a few weeks the tyranny of the government and of the inquisition, almost considered omnipotent from more than two centuries of abject submission or superstitious dread, sunk under their influence.

Conduct of  
the provin-  
cial govern-  
ments.

On the other side, the arrangements for completing the change in the government kept

Proceed-  
ings at  
Bayonne.

CHAP. pace with the efforts of the people to oppose  
 II. them. On the 12th May a message was sent to  
 1808. the Council of Castile from Napoleon, demand-

ing their opinion on which of the members of his family the crown could be bestowed, with most advantage to the interests of the two nations : but they immediately replying that the change of dynasty was a subject beyond their power of discussion, Marshal Murat caused it to be notified to them that the determination to place a French prince on the throne of Spain was unchangeable, and that they had merely to deliberate upon the individual. At the same time, it was intimated that Joseph Buonaparte, who, two years previously, had by less unworthy means displaced another branch of the Bourbons from the throne of Naples, would be the selection most consonant to the politics of Napoleon ; in consequence of which,

Council of Castile solicits the nomination of Joseph Buonaparte as king.

Also the junta of government, and the municipality of Madrid.

A national assembly of deputies convoked.

on the 15th, a deputation was selected to proceed to Bayonne to solicit his nomination. The junta of government had previously written to the same effect, and the municipality of Madrid also added their humble solicitation to Marshal Murat to support their wishes with the Emperor. On receiving these addresses, Napoleon convoked a meeting of 150 deputies from the provinces, principal cities, and corporate bodies, to be held at Bayonne on the 15th June, to give the subject full consideration : and

as an inducement for a cheerful attendance, did not scruple to publish that, the Spanish nation having grown old, he had received a *mission* to restore it to youth and happiness.

CHAP.  
II.  
1808.

25th May.  
Conduct of  
Charles's  
and Ferdi-  
nand's cour-  
tiers.

The majority of the nobility and superior clergy, in the suite of Charles or Ferdinand, trained to passive obedience, never for a moment questioned the right of their sovereign to transfer his authority, and hastened, by protestations of fidelity, to gain the favour of their new master; whilst a few, of liberal sentiments and extended views, rejoicing in the change as a means of procuring for their countrymen a more enlightened government, actively assisted in its completion. On the contrary, the principal persons in the provinces and cities generally declined to serve as deputies, and in most districts no election was attempted. Napoleon, unwilling to let this non-compliance with his summons become apparent, and impatient to proceed with his work, abruptly cut short the term of election, and on the 5th June, from the few deputies arrived, mixed up with various individuals nominated by himself, formed an assembly to represent the several orders of the state; when under sanction of their approval, he conferred the ceded crown on his brother Joseph, proclaiming that he did so at the request of the highest council and chief city of the nation.

Joseph nam-  
ed king:

Deputations, composed of the most eminent

CHAP. members of the different corporate bodies, and  
 II. various noblemen and ecclesiastics of the high-  
 1808. est rank in person greeted the new monarch on  
 his arrival on the 7th, with addresses of felici-  
 tation.\* On the 11th his nomination to the  
 sovereignty was notified to the council of go-  
 vernment, which immediately communicated  
 the change to the people, recommending tran-  
 quillity and obedience.

Compli-  
 mented on  
 his arrival  
 at Bayonne.

Military ex-  
 ertions in  
 the south.

The military exertions of the patriots began  
 at this time to assume a formidable character.  
 The corps under General Dupont had made  
 such progress before any general opposition was  
 attempted, that it crossed the Sierra Morena  
 almost without loss, and having routed a Spanish  
 corps which attempted to dispute the passage of

\* Amongst other persons of rank, were the Prince of Castel  
 Franco; the Dukes of Infantado, Frias, Parque, Hajar, and  
 Ossuna; the Marquisses of Hariza and Santa Cruz; the  
 Counts of Fernan-nunez, Orgaz, and Santa Coloma, *grandees*  
 of Spain; also the Marquis of Castellanos, Espeja; Counts  
 Castelflorido, and Noblejas; the Counsellors of Castile,  
 Colon, Lardizabal, Torres, and Villela; the chief Inquisitor,  
 Etenhard; Generals Cervigno, Hervasti and Ydiaquez: the  
 Archbishop of Burgos and other dignified ecclesiastics also  
 attended.

It should be mentioned to the credit of the bishops of  
 Orense and St. Ander, that they each manfully and openly  
 refused to obey Napoleon's summons: the former published  
 a long and dignified refusal; the latter more laconically re-  
 plied, "I cannot make it convenient to attend, and if I could,  
 I would not."



the Guadalquivir at the bridge of Alcolea, entered Cordova on the 7th June after a slight resistance, which was made a pretext for pillaging the town where they halted. From that moment every supply was withheld, and every impediment raised to retard their march, and gain time to organise means of defence at Seville. General Castaños, who had for several years commanded in the lines in front of Gibraltar, was named commander in chief—all the troops watching that garrison were withdrawn, and with those from the maritime places, were formed into an army. In the mean while every detachment sent out by the French to gain information or to forage, was driven back by the few troops in their front, till, after ten days hesitation, Dupont, on the approach of General Castaños with his army, retired to Andujar and retrenched his corps in a position on the right of the Guadalquivir, sending pressing entreaties to the government at Madrid, for immediate reinforcements.

CHAP.  
II.  
1808.

The inhabitants of Cadiz, on receiving intelligence of the installation of the junta at Seville, and of their declaration of war against France, and peace with England, impatient at the temporizing conduct of Solano, Marquis del Socorro, their governor, who issued a proclamation pointing out the ill consequences likely to result from such a proceeding, and recommending submis-

Occur-  
rences at  
Cadiz,

29th May.

CHAP. sion to the injunction of Ferdinand, rose and  
 II. put him to death.

1808.

French  
squadron  
surrenders.

9th June.

General Morla, whom they nominated to succeed to the command, organised with much promptitude a system of defence, and opening a fire on five French sail of the line and a frigate lying in the harbour, of which a British squadron precluded the escape, obliged them, on the 14th June, to surrender at discretion. Immediately after this encouraging success, the transports with the troops under General Spencer having appeared off the Guadiana, a French corps, marching on Cadiz from Portugal, retrograded, and the garrison of Faro, cut off in its communications, surrendered from want of provisions, on which the inhabitants of Algarve sent to form an alliance with the junta of Seville; and at Oporto, sixteen Spanish battalions, being recalled by the junta of Galicia, withdrew on the 4th June from under the command of General Junot and joined the patriots' standard.

Valencia  
successfully  
resists.

Marshal Moncey's corps totally failed in the attack of Valencia: it sat down before the town on the 28th June, and attempted to frighten the inhabitants into submission by a heavy fire of musketry and artillery; which failing in effect, and an army under General Caro making partial attacks on its rear, and threatening its communications, Moncey hastily retired on Madrid, sustaining some loss on his march.

About the same period, other French de-

tachments moved from Madrid to occupy the northern provinces ; one of which under General Merle, after a sharp affair at Cabezon wherein both parties claimed the victory, proceeded against Santander: the patriotic bishop, confident in the justice of his cause, but ignorant of military affairs, advanced at the head of his flock some miles on the road to cover the city ; where being vigorously attacked, his forces were so instantaneously dispersed, that with difficulty he effected his own escape, and the fugitives carrying terror and confusion into the town it surrendered without resistance.

CHAP.

II.

1808.

12th June.

Military occurrences in the northern provinces.

21st June.

Notwithstanding the hostile attitude the country had assumed, the arrangements at Bayonne for the new dynasty proceeded as if in consonance with the wishes of the majority of the nation, and so lightly was the growing opposition regarded, that it was not deemed necessary to bring forward an additional soldier for their support. The attention of the several parties was chiefly occupied in planning the future government of the country ; and under the auspices of the assembly convened by Napoleon, a constitution was digested on highly enlightened and liberal principles, such as separating the public expenditure from that of the royal family ; establishing a representative and legislative authority distinct from the executive ; making the judges independent, and confirming the liberty of the subject and the freedom of

Bayonne.

Joseph's new constitution.

CHAP. II. the press. On the 7th of July, Joseph took an oath to maintain the constitution in its full integrity, and, in return, the ninety-one noblemen, ecclesiastics and lawyers assembled in council, swore to obey him as their lawful monarch. After this ceremony, the articles were ordered to be published throughout the country; medals were struck commemorative of the auspicious event, and Joseph named the persons to fill the several high dignities in the state, or confirmed the appointments of those previously in office.\* The change now seemed to the upper ranks so fully assured, that the most upright ministers of Charles and Ferdinand transferred their services to the new monarch,† and many of the most eminent of the clergy and nobility, who were not present, sent letters of adhesion and felicitation; and in arranging

1808.  
is sworn to.

Joseph nominates his ministers, &c.  
4th July.

General acquiescence of the higher classes.

\* The Marquis of Hariza was named grand chamberlain;  
The Duke of Híjar, Grand Master of the Ceremonies;  
Count Fernan-Núñez, Grand Huntsman;  
The Duke of Infantado, Colonel of the Spanish Guards;  
The Prince of Castel-Franco, Colonel of the Walloon Guards;  
The Dukes del Parque and St. Germain, Captains of the Body-guard;  
and took the oaths of fidelity.

The Dukes of Frias, and Ossuna, also the Marquesses of Santa Cruz, Orgaz, and Castel Florida, were confirmed in the appointments they held under Charles IV. and severally took an oath of fidelity.

† Urquijo, named Prime Minister;  
Cevallos, named Minister for Foreign Affairs;  
Azanza, do. for the Indies;

the articles of the constitution, those bodies had supported their privileges with an ardour that shewed they deemed the decision final.\* The most extraordinary congratulation, however, was that of Ferdinand, who, from his retirement at Valencey, sent a letter to Joseph, in his own name, and in that of his brother and uncle, expressive of their delight that Spain had been favoured with so upright and virtuous a monarch, accompanied by the oaths of fidelity to the new dynasty of all his faithful Spanish followers, from the highest grandee to the lowest attendant.

CHAP.

II.

1808.

Congratulation of Ferdinand.

22d June.

The new Sovereign sat out on the 9th July to exercise his authority at the seat of government, and, unhappily, the patriots immediately afterwards brought on themselves a very severe military discomfiture, and gave éclat to the

O'Farril, named Minister for War;

Gaspar Melchior } do. for the Interior;  
de Jovellanos,

Pignuela, do. for Justice;

Cabarrus, do. Finances;

had all served Charles or Ferdinand.

\* Louis de Bourbon, Archbishop of Toledo, Primate of Spain, and cousin of the King, even wrote, so early as the 22d of May, to express his assent to the cession made by his family. Michael Acevedo, General of the Cordeliers, submitted to the assembly a very laboured and well-written memoir against the general suppression of the religious orders; and the Chief Inquisitor Etenhard a protest against the suppression of the Holy Tribunal, recommending rather an alteration in its forms of proceeding.

CHAP. commencement of his rule. By great exertion  
 II. the levies of Galicia and those of the western  
 1808. provinces, with 5000 prisoners of war returned

Patriots de-  
 feated at  
 Medina del  
 Rio Seco.

14th July.

from England, fully clothed and equipped, were early in July united into an army of 30,000 men at Benavente. The command of this force was entrusted to General Cuesta, who, consulting merely his own courage and the ardour of the troops, advanced towards Valladolid, and imprudently hazarded the issue of a general action with a select French corps of 12,000 men under Marshal Bessières, in a position at Medina del Rio Seco.—Some rapid cavalry manœuvres threw the young Spanish troops into confusion, of which the infantry profited to advance and gain a complete victory; after a short resistance the whole army retired with the greatest precipitation, one division alone, under General Blake, preserving a degree of order, and attempting to cover the retreat. The French followed up their success for some miles, capturing the greater part of the Spanish artillery and baggage, and making between 2 and 3,000 prisoners; but did not push on to Benavente, till the 19th, which gave the fugitives time to reform and resume their retreat in an orderly manner to the confines of Galicia.

The victory at Rio Seco, last narrated, which obtained an undue degree of importance from the novel circumstance of its having caused the entire dispersion of the defeated force, confirmed

the belief of the easy dissipation of the other insurgent armies, and the submission of the provinces, when it was expected that the mild character of Joseph would conciliate all interests.

CHAP.  
II.  
1808.

Under these flattering expectations the new Sovereign entered his capital on the 20th July, and three days subsequently was proclaimed King Joseph Napoleon the First, with the usual ceremonies. Every person in employment and every corporate body, with the honourable exception of the Council of Castile, took the oath of allegiance, and gave brilliancy to the fête by their dress and equipages; no means were neglected by the intruders to render the ceremony imposing, and a liberal distribution of money with a gratuitous sight of the slaughter of an extraordinary number of bulls, procured for their exertions the applause and acclamation of the populace.

Joseph enters Madrid.

The Emperor on the 21st quitted Bayonne, making the detour of Pau and Toulouse to Bourdeaux, and from thence by La Vendée and Nantes along the banks of the Loire to Paris. It is worthy of mention, as shewing the popularity of his government at this period, that arches of triumph, illuminations, and rejoicings of every nature and description, awaited his arrival at each place, and that persons of all ranks crowded the road as he passed, testifying the most extraordinary marks of respect and attachment to his family and person. In the district of

Buonaparte returns to Paris.

Moniteur.

CHAP. La Vendée more particularly, he was enthusiastically hailed as the pacificator of France; and his late unworthy craft being unknown, he was frequently complimented as the guardian and benefactor of Spain. Napoleon, satisfied by these expressions that his subjects had imbibed a favourable impression of his conduct towards the Spanish princes, journeyed on with perfect content, triumphing in the complete success of his plot, and at the importance of the acquisition he had made.

Operations  
against Du-  
pont's  
corps.

The delusion, however, was speedily dissipated.—A division of 8,000 men, under General Beliard, dispatched to the relief of Dupont, in crossing the Sierra Morena was so impeded by want of provisions and the hostility of the mountaineers, that after some days it returned to Madrid without having communicated with the troops in the south, although a corps of 6,000 men had been detached to Carolina under General Wedel to cover its junction. The force at Andujar thus weakened, and left to its fate, was closely blockaded and incessantly harassed by the Spaniards, who had now collected above 25,000 men at Los Visos in their front, and had occupied all the surrounding mountains with armed peasantry. The extremity to which it was reduced is thus described by General Dupont in an intercepted letter to General Beliard imploring succours.

“ We have not a moment to lose in quitting a



position where we cannot subsist. The soldier  
all day under arms, cannot, as hitherto, reap the  
corn and make bread, and all the peasantry have  
deserted their homes. For heaven's sake send  
us prompt assistance.—Send us a strong com-  
pact body of troops—send us, without a mo-  
ment's delay, medicines and linen for the  
wounded, for the enemy for a month past have  
intercepted all our ammunition, our waggons and  
provisions from Toledo." In this straightened  
condition the French remained for sixteen days,  
when, being deprived of every supply, Dupont  
meditated to fall back through Baylen and join  
Wedel's force at Carolina; but a division of Spa-  
niards under General Reding boldly passed the  
Guadalquivir at the ford of Mengibar, and took  
up a strong position on the road between them. 19th July.  
Being unable to subsist for another day, General  
Dupont, to free himself, directed a combined  
attack to be made by his own and General  
Wedel's force on Reding's division. The column 21st July.  
from Andujar, having marched during the night  
unobserved by the troops in its front, was at  
first successful; but the orders to Wedel not  
having been received in time to admit of his  
attack being simultaneous, General Dupont  
was not able to force Reding's position before  
the whole of General Castaños's army came up  
with his rear: the numbers were then too  
unequal; after a long struggle the French be-  
came worn out, and gave way on all points, with

CHAP.  
II.  
1808.

CHAP. the loss of between 2 and 3,000 in killed and  
 II. wounded, on which Dupont negotiated a capi-  
 1808. tulation, and surrendered the remainder of his  
 force prisoners of war.—General Wedel's divi-  
 sion, which had routed every thing opposed to  
 it, reached the field of action near Baylen soon  
 after the surrender, when deeming further suc-  
 cess hopeless it also capitulated; but having its  
 rear open, with the power of attempting to effect  
 a retreat, it obtained the more favourable terms  
 of being sent to France. The number of veteran  
 troops thus made prisoners rather exceeded  
 14,000. Impartial truth requires it to be added,  
 that the junta of Seville sullied the lustre of  
 these brilliant achievements, by a breach of the  
 capitulation granted to Wedel's corps; on its  
 arrival for embarkation at Cadiz, it was, by their  
 orders, detained, and men and officers placed in  
 close confinement, where the greater number  
 miserably perished.

Patriot  
 forces pre-  
 pare to  
 move on  
 Madrid.

General Castanos immediately made prepara-  
 tions to move on Madrid from the south, and  
 General Cuesta having re-organised his army,  
 and, not being rendered more prudent by defeat,  
 was again in march on the same point from the  
 north, when the probable ill consequences of  
 such premature and unconnected movements  
 were luckily averted by the apprehensions of  
 the intruders.

Difficulties  
 of Joseph's  
 govern-  
 ment.

In most countries, with such a reduced mili-  
 tary establishment as in Spain at this period,

the general adhesion of the nobility and constituted authorities to the person in possession of the regal dignity, would have been sufficient to have maintained him on the throne, or would at least have rendered him the chief of a very powerful party ; but the Castilian grandees and nobles, chained to the court, and prevented with jealous care from residing on their estates, were almost unknown to their tenantry. The only great resident proprietors were the clergy, who, having unbounded influence under the Bourbons, were to a man hostile to the change, and in secret strenuously exerted both their worldly and spiritual authority in opposition to the new dynasty. The several branches of the government had been debased into mere instruments of the kingly power, and the will of the monarch, promulgated by ministers responsible to him alone, had become the paramount authority throughout the realm, and was implicitly regarded as the supreme law. Joseph, therefore, viewed by the people as an unlawful intruder, found himself surrounded by most of the nobility and ministers of the former court, and receiving all the homage of sovereignty, without being able to influence any portion of the country in his favour, or to organise the smallest royal band. There being no representative body to stand between the sovereign and the nation, his rule could not be disguised or

CHAP.  
II.  
1808.

CHAP. palliated by any semblance of popular forms;  
 II. and it was found necessary to enforce all his de-  
 1808. crees by the aid of the French troops. It soon  
 became apparent that their numbers were alto-  
 gether insufficient for that purpose and also to  
 contend with the provincial levies; Joseph,  
 therefore, on hearing of the approach of the  
 several armies, alarmed at the general movement  
 and at the great loss his troops had already sus-  
 tained, withdrew from Madrid on the 1st of  
 August, after ten days' residence, and fixed his  
 court at Vitoria, causing all the French troops,  
 about 47,000 men, to retire into cantonments  
 behind the Ebro.

The intru-  
 ders aban-  
 don the  
 capital;

how misre-  
 presented in  
 France.

This abandonment of the seat of government,  
 and of the richest provinces of the kingdom,  
 become absolutely necessary to prevent the de-  
 struction of the intruders in detail, was impu-  
 dently set forth to the world by the French  
 press, as a mere change of quarters, for the pur-  
 pose of breathing a purer air and drinking better  
 water. Nothing was allowed to appear on the  
 subject of the rising of the people, except an  
 occasional paragraph bewailing the influence of  
 the monks, who, opposed to every thing liberal,  
 and united with England the eternal enemy of  
 the continent, were represented as having stirred  
 up some of the lower classes into insurrection.  
 These statements invariably concluded with the  
 assurance that every good and virtuous man in

Spain was attached to the new order of government; and that perfect obedience would speedily be enforced. Joseph's Spanish adherents, however, thought so differently, that, on his arrival at Vitoria, he found them reduced to five ministers, five counsellors of state, two grandees, two marquesses, four generals, one counsellor of Castile, one counsellor of the Indies, two members of the junta of commerce, the royal secretary for the interpretation of languages, a few clerks, and about twenty private individuals.

CHAP.  
II.  
1808.

The retreat of the different French corps was effected without the slightest molestation, and when united into a body, they bade defiance to every attack, but had the mortification to find all extraneous exertion end in defeat or discomfiture. At Zaragossa, an unfortified town on the Ebro, of the utmost importance to the security of their new cantonments, a few ill-disciplined troops under General Palafox, with the citizens, successfully resisted their efforts for sixty-three days. That city, of considerable extent, intersected by a broad river, and studded with large massive buildings easily convertible into separate defensible posts, is peculiarly adapted for internal warfare. The French, not anticipating such mode of resistance, attempted its reduction with a very inadequate force—a corps of only 5,000 infantry

First defence of Zaragossa.

CHAP. and 500 cavalry, with a few field-pieces, under  
 II. General Lefebvre, being allotted for that ser-  
 1808. vice. It marched from Pamplona early in June,  
 and in a petty affair on the 14th, at Alagon, dis-  
 persed the Zaragossan forces about 3000 in num-  
 ber, which had imprudently advanced to give  
 battle, and pursued them to the gates of the city;  
 when the French, seeing the only defence to be a  
 mud wall, for the purposes of municipal regula-  
 tions, and despising men who had fled before  
 them almost without resistance, boldly assaulted  
 the place near the gate of Portello. The Spa-  
 niards, however, firmly resisted behind the wall  
 and within the buildings round the spot, and  
 after many gallant efforts, attended with partial  
 success, the assailants were repulsed with great  
 loss, most of those who had penetrated into the  
 town being put to death.

On this failure General Lefebvre withdrew  
 to a position a few miles distant from the city,  
 where he remained till the end of the month,  
 when having received some twelve-pounders, he  
 took possession of the heights of Torrero, in front  
 of which he put his artillery in battery, and after  
 forty-eight hours firing, the wall appearing con-  
 siderably damaged, again boldly advanced to  
 the assault: the place, however, having remained  
 open on the left of the Ebro, above 5,000 troops  
 with artillery had joined the defenders, and such  
 a destructive fire of musketry was maintained

2d July.

on the storming columns during their approach, that they broke and fell back, without making an effort to force over the defences.—This second failure rendered ultimate success very precarious, as it gave the citizens the highest confidence, who were, moreover, hourly improving their defences, besides receiving supplies of every description from the country on the north of the river.—To deprive them of these succours, a bridge was laid down below the town, by which the cavalry crossed on the 11th of July, and completely invested the place, destroying the mills and preventing the entry of the foragers. Shortly afterwards, a reinforcement of men with some heavy artillery having joined the besiegers, they effected a large breach near the convent of Santa Engracia, which they successfully stormed on the 4th of August, and having penetrated into the very heart of the city, sent a summons to General Palafox to surrender, to which, in order to keep up the spirit of his people, he returned the celebrated laconic reply, *Guerra al cuchillo*—War even to the knife. From that moment the contest became a succession of personal combats amongst the ruins, or in the houses, wherein the assailants, being unable to make use of their artillery, and deriving little advantage from discipline or tactics, had nothing to balance the superior numbers of the defenders. This

CHAP.  
II.  
1808.

CHAP.

II.

1808.

14th Aug.

Defence of  
Gerona.Craft of  
Buonaparte  
first ex-  
posed ;

quickly became evident to the Zaragossans, and a feeling of enthusiastic confidence spread through all ranks and both sexes.—For eleven days and nights the struggle continued without intermission, the French rather losing than gaining ground, when, to use the expression of their own bulletin, “after fourteen fortified convents, three-fourths of the city, the arsenal and all the magazines, were in their possession, and that nearly the whole of the unfortunate city of Zaragossa had been destroyed by the mine, the artillery, or the flames,” they were obliged, by the approach of the Spanish armies to raise the siege, and retire on their main body. Gerona likewise opposed a successful resistance to their efforts.—General Duhesme, after bombarding the place during the first weeks in July, and being twice repulsed in attempts to carry an outwork by storm, relinquished the undertaking, suffering much from petty attacks on his retreat to Barcelona, which place the Catalans immediately blockaded.

The concentration of the intruders gave great scope for the popular movements, and several of the late ministers of Ferdinand, seeing the determined resistance of their countrymen, quitted the service of Joseph and embraced the popular side. One of them, Don Pedro Cevallos, at this period, first made known the secret treaty with its attendant train of artifice by which the royal family had been entrapped, and an insi-



dious enemy introduced into the heart of the country. This exposition raised the national feeling almost to enthusiasm. To conquer or to die for our country and Ferdinand the Seventh, was inscribed on every banner, which simple and intelligible sentiment served to unite the exertions of all classes. The clergy under its inspiration exhorted to activity and perseverance; the students at the colleges formed themselves into battalions; many young men of birth emulated their spirited conduct; the peasantry assembled in multitudes to be drilled; corps were organized in every province; military rank and appointments were distributed by the Juntas with lavish profusion; every man exhibited some emblem of patriotism, and the country seemed overspread with a population of soldiers or political enthusiasts.

CHAP.  
II.

1808.

The enthusiasm it excited in favour of Ferdinand.

Corps now pressed forward on the Ebro from every province, and as the French remained on the defensive, never risking the slightest loss, their prudence was imputed to fear, and a presumptuous confidence took deep root amongst the patriot officers, and spread over the whole population. In the exultation of the moment, the complete defeat which the army under General Cuesta had sustained, from a very inferior French force, was glossed over as merely the effects of a superior cavalry acting in a level and open country against young troops.—The

Spaniards become too confident.

CHAP. II. ability of the new levies to contend with the French in the mountainous districts was not the more doubted; and those most moderate in their expectations confined their wishes to the intermixture of a greater proportion of old soldiers.—These were most opportunely supplied by the courage and loyalty of the Marquis de la Romana, who, in command of the 13,000 veterans cajoled from Spain in the previous autumn, had, by the precautionary policy of Buonaparte, been removed to the distant shores of the Baltic. There, precluded from all direct intercourse with his country, being deceived by artful representations of the submission and attachment of his countrymen to Joseph, and resistance in the midst of an overpowering French force being hopeless, he gave his adhesion to the new government; but soon after, being made acquainted by the British admiral, Keats, with a faithful account of the events passing in Spain, he planned an attempt to liberate his army.\*—Deceiving the vigilance of

The Mar-  
quis de la  
Romana  
brings home  
his army.

\* The circumstances attending the rescue of the Spanish troops were as follow.

On the 5th of August, a Spanish subaltern officer crossing with dispatches from Langeland to Nyeborg, in an open boat in the middle of the day, conceived the project of rejoining his countrymen, through the medium of the English navy, and being well seconded by his servant, obliged the boatmen, by dint of beating them with their sabres, to row along-side the

Marshal Bernadotte, the French commander in Jutland, he secretly assembled the different bat-

CHAP.

II.

1808.

Edgar, 64, lying in the offing, from which vessel he was sent on board the flag ship, the *Superb*. The previous day a captain of the Spanish navy had arrived from England, with dispatches from the Junta at Seville to the Marquis de la Romana;—the officer willingly took charge of them, with a letter from Admiral Keats, and being landed in the night, carried them in safety to the Marquis in Jutland.

The same day an aide-de-camp of Bernadotte had been at the Spanish head-quarters, to insist that the conditional oath of allegiance taken by the Spanish troops to Joseph Buonaparte should be strengthened according to a prescribed form. To this every individual manifested a strong repugnance; and La Romana, finding the British Admiral prepared to receive the troops, instantly decided to take advantage of the irritation of the moment, and withdraw them. The Spanish army was quartered in Funen, Jutland, Langeland, and Zealand. On pretence of marching to oblige the troops in the former place to take the prescribed oath, he readily obtained from the Danish magistrates, waggons and boats to facilitate his movements, and by good arrangement and extraordinary long marches, united all his forces from the two first places (except one regiment of cavalry) at Nyeborg, on the 9th of August, two of the battalions even coming from the extremity of Jutland, and crossing the Little Belt. The Marquis at the same time sent orders to the troops in Zealand, about 3,000 in number, to march to the shore of the Great Belt to be taken off by the English ships; but the French ambassador having intercepted the dispatch, they were disarmed and put under restraint. From Nyeborg the troops were conveyed to Langeland, where they remained till the 21st, when they were taken to Gottenburg, and put on board English transports.

It is understood that, some weeks previously, offers of as-

CHAP. talions, and, on communicating his intentions,  
 II. finding men and officers anxious to return  
 1808. home, directed them, by marches of unequalled  
 length and celerity, on Nyeborg and Lange-

land. A regiment of cavalry in Jutland and  
 three battalions in Zealand, being immediately  
 in contact with a superior force, were surrounded  
 and disarmed; but the remainder of his army,  
 9000 in number, reached the point of concen-  
 21st Aug. tration in safety, from whence they were em-  
 barked for Santander.

On the liberation of the capital, the mem-  
 Divided go- bers of the council of government formed them-  
 vernment of selves into a central junta, and immediately  
 the country. issued a proclamation inviting the provinces to  
 4th August. send deputies to confer with them in adjusting  
 the national representation. In the mean while,  
 in the name of Ferdinand, they assumed a ge-  
 neral direction of affairs; but their authority  
 being rather tolerated than acknowledged by  
 the local juntas, it had little weight, and the  
 country continued to labour under all the dis-

sistance from England to favour his escape had been made to  
 the Marquis de la Romana, by means of an agent who reached  
 his head-quarters under a low disguise; but the probability of  
 success did not seem sufficient to warrant his making the  
 attempt. The Spanish troops were treated with particular con-  
 sideration by the French, and were paid and subsisted by Den-  
 mark, over and above their ordinary pay from Spain. It was  
 hinted more than once to the Marquis de la Romana, that a  
 principality might be the reward of a steady attachment to  
 Joseph.

advantages of an imperfect federative system. **CHAP.**  
 The British ministry, which had unceasingly **II.**  
 urged the establishment of a vigorous executive, **1808.**  
 with power to convoke the Cortes, or some other  
 representative body, seeing the opportunity fa-  
 vourable, redoubled their exertions to effect it :  
 the greatest opposition, however, was made by  
 the several local juntas to giving themselves a  
 superior—each wished to engross the chief rule,  
 or to have the seat of government in their own  
 province; and a warm altercation took place  
 between the council of Castile and the junta of  
 Seville, both urging a right to the supreme au-  
 thority during an interregnum—and the latter  
 not unjustly taunting the former with its sub-  
 mission to Murat. These petty struggles were  
 maintained with considerable acrimony for some  
 weeks, and threatened a fatal schism between  
 some of the provinces; but at length the whole  
 yielded to the forcible persuasions of England,  
 and it was arranged to form a supreme junta of  
 government at Madrid, by a deputation of two  
 members from each of the seventeen provincial  
 assemblies.

Arrange-  
 ment for  
 forming a  
 central go-  
 vernment.

Thus the month of August closed on a suc-  
 cession of events, with little exception, encour-  
 aging to the hopes of the patriots. With such  
 general good-will, and such abundant materials,  
 only a little arrangement seemed requisite to  
 organize armies worthy of the cause, both in

Encou-  
 raging pros-  
 pect of af-  
 fairs.

CHAP. magnitude and zeal; and, as no rumours were  
II. heard of reinforcements arriving to the French,  
1808. every one confidently looked forward to the instalment of a Supreme Government, for the signal of a general movement, which should, in a moment, annihilate the intruders. Under that flattering expectation, a battering train and siege stores were sent in frigates to the harbour of Santoña, that no time might be lost in reducing the fortresses of Pamplona, St. Sebastian, &c., and the subsequent operations in France became subject of frequent and grave deliberation.

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## CHAPTER III.

*Affairs of Portugal—Exactions of the French—Resistance of the People—Endeavours to coerce them into submission—A British Force arrives to their assistance—lands in Mondego Bay—drives back the French advanced Corps at Roliça—defeats their main body under General Junot at Vimiera—The Commanders enter into a Convention for the Evacuation of the Country by the French—its Stipulations and Execution.*

IN Portugal, likewise, at this period, resistance to the French had become nearly general. After the assurances so strongly held forth by General Junot that he came “as a friend to make common cause with their Prince,” the violent measure of depriving the whole royal family and their faithful followers of their rights and inheritance, could not fail to produce the utmost dissatisfaction and alarm; and all attempts at conciliation, by mild or equitable treatment, were rendered vain by edicts from the Tuileries, uniting exaction and oppression so blindly that the rapacity of one was foiled by the aggravated distress produced by another: the imperial decree, which imposed an excessive contribution on the inhabitants exceeding four millions sterling, was immediately followed by a second, forbidding the export of their wines and other surplus

CHAP.  
III.  
1808.

Exactions  
and oppres-  
sions of the  
French.

CHAP. products; and the consequences were, that the  
 III. contribution, though subsequently reduced to  
 1808. half the amount, could only be raised by the  
 most violent and oppressive measures, and with  
 almost an equivalent deduction from the ordi-  
 nary revenue. The arbitrary proceedings at-  
 tendant on these decrees and their desolating  
 effects, surpassed all other grievances: com-  
 merce being entirely suspended, the merchant  
 was deprived of his income; the cultivators,  
 without a vent for their produce, could make  
 no returns to the proprietors of the soil, and  
 multitudes of all classes were, in consequence,  
 thrown out of employment and filled the coun-  
 try with beggars. To these were added the  
 disbanded officers and soldiers, and public func-  
 tionaries, some even of talent and character,  
 who, dismissed without the smallest stipend,  
 wandered about soliciting food, and inflaming  
 the public mind by a recital of their sufferings  
 and of the injustice of the intruders.

General  
distress.

A division  
of Spanish  
troops with-  
draw.

The insurrection in Spain isolated Junot's  
 force; and instead of obtaining assistance from  
 the other French armies, he was directed, at the  
 end of May, to send two considerable detach-  
 ments to Cadiz and Ciudad Rodrigo. The for-  
 mer, it has been stated, hesitated to attempt the  
 passage of the Guadiana; the latter halted at  
 Almeida, in consequence of the Spanish troops at  
 Oporto having, on the 4th June, obeyed a sum-



mons from the junta of Galicia, and joined their countrymen in arms. General Junot, before the knowledge of the defection of his auxiliaries in the north became public, judiciously contrived to disarm the remainder, nearly 6000 in number. On pretence of a military movement, he caused the different regiments to embark on the Tagus, and bringing them under the guns of the men of war, resistance became vain, and they were, without a struggle, conveyed on board of hulks prepared for their reception. These occurrences tended to diminish the power of the French, till at length the general discontent ripened into open insurrection. Oporto first declared itself. The citizens in the middle of June, soon after the departure of the Spaniards, overpowered the intrusive garrison and hoisted the standard of independence. General Loison was immediately ordered to march with the detachment from Almeida and restore the French dominion ; but in attempting to cross the Douro at Mezaôfrio, he was repulsed with loss by a body of armed peasantry posted on its banks, and retired to Lamego, on which a general rising in the north followed ; a provisional government, in the name of the lawful sovereign, was established at Oporto, under the presidency of the Bishop, and a deputation sent to England to solicit assistance. Nearly at the same moment, the flame burst forth at the opposite extremity of the kingdom : in Algarve

CHAP.

III.

1808.

10th June.

The remainder disarmed.

Insurrection at Oporto.

22d June.

8th July.

19th June.

CHAP. the royal standard was displayed, and the French  
 III. expelled. At Lisbon, the inhabitants depending  
 1808. on maritime communication for subsistence,  
 State of were reduced to such distress by the blockade  
 Lisbon. of the Tagus, that many daily perished, and the  
 utmost vigilance of the intruders with difficulty  
 restrained the capital from joining in the strug-  
 gle for freedom. The patriots in the city esta-  
 blished a secret communication with Admiral  
 Sir Charles Cotton, commanding the fleet block-  
 ading the Tagus, and representing the French  
 force as not exceeding five thousand men,  
 pressed the disembarkation of the corps under  
 Major General Spencer; but that officer, on his  
 arrival, ascertaining the force round Lisbon to  
 be far greater than had been stated to the ad-  
 June 24th. miral, declined the undertaking: nevertheless  
 the appearance of the transports off the coast,  
 and a proclamation in the name of His Britannic  
 Majesty extensively circulated by the admiral,  
 promising immediate assistance in troops, arms  
 and ammunition, served much to embolden the  
 chiefs and spread the insurrection. Sir Charles  
 also materially strengthened their cause by dis-  
 tributing above a thousand muskets, and occu-  
 pying Figueras with a garrison of three hun-  
 dred marines. General Junot, alarmed at the  
 general discontent, and not having a force to  
 keep in subjection the entire population, endea-  
 voured to divide opinions, and gain time by

Early in  
 July.

conciliatory measures. Finding, however, that the Portuguese were no longer to be deceived by promises, and that partial risings were becoming general, he decreed, that whatsoever town or village should oppose the French troops, should be given up to pillage, the inhabitants put to the sword, and the houses levelled with the ground; and further, that all individuals found with arms in their hands under any circumstances, should be instantly shot. These threats were partially enforced at Leyria and at Nazareth in the beginning of July, by Generals Margaron and Thomières, and subsequently with a terrible severity by a column of 5000 men under General Loison at Evora, Beja, Guarda, Atalaya, &c. At the former place the means of defence were organized by General Leite, with a body of Spanish troops, and consequently the resistance was regular warfare, rather than a popular commotion; notwithstanding which, General Loison, on its capture on the 29th July, delivered it over to pillage, and the atrocities of the soldiery. Those spared, still shudder whilst they relate the deliberate and sportive cruelty with which, for three days that unrestrained licentiousness prevailed, multitudes of women and children, but, above all, priests, were drawn from their places of refuge, and either ill-treated or murdered. Creditable witnesses assert that several thousand individuals

CHAP.

III.

1808.

26th June.

5 &amp; 15 July.

General  
Loison's  
conduct.

CHAP. were killed or maimed during the massacre.

III.



1808.

July.

An English  
force an-  
nounced.

General  
Junot's ar-  
rangements.

The ancient city of Beja still more severely suffered: as a punishment for repeated commotions, it was, after an extensive massacre and general pillage of the inhabitants, delivered over to the flames. At Guarda, twelve hundred killed or maimed were numbered on the ground. Of the excesses at Atalaya, the particulars are unknown; as, the inhabitants being few, it is understood that none were spared to give the details. These striking examples enforced a momentary tranquillity south of the Douro, but they also excited a deep spirit of revenge and indignation, and in August, on the assurance of the English being about to land, the insurrection became general. Whilst General Friere encouraged and organized the peasantry in the north, the Count of Castro Marino, at the head of some thousand followers, overran all Alemtejo. General Junot, though much annoyed and straitened in his communications by the hostility of the natives, treated their efforts as secondary considerations, well knowing that having garrisons in Almeida, Elvas, and Peniche, and holding the fortified posts of Setubal, Palmela, St. Julian, &c. should he triumph over the threatened invasion, his victorious legions would in a moment annihilate such undisciplined bands, and restore his authority. He therefore concentrated his forces for the defence of the capital, posting his

advance of 3 or 4000 men under General Laborde at Leyria, being the point of junction of most of the great roads from the north, and directing General Loison with his corps to cross the Tagus at Abrantes, and take post at the same place. The town of Lisbon was unfortified, and possessed no interior posts except a small dilapidated castle, respectable only from its isolated and commanding situation in the middle of the city. All attack from the sea, however, was precluded by numerous heavy batteries, and Fort St. Julian, situated at the mouth of the Tagus, a small but respectable work, having a lofty and well covered revêtement, and capable of twelve or fourteen days resistance. In the harbour were eight Russian sail of the line; the crews of which, about 6000 men, though at war with England, and in strict alliance with France, were neutral in the struggle with the natives: what part they might take against an invader was uncertain. Such was the situation of affairs in Portugal, when the British arrived to her aid.

CHAP.  
III.  
1808.

From the commencement of the insurrectionary movements, the liberation of Portugal was regarded by the English Cabinet as a primary step towards the independence of the Peninsula: in which opinion the Spanish authorities fully concurring, a force of 9000 men embarked at Cork for a distant service under Lieutenant

English preparations:

CHAP. General Sir Arthur Wellesley, K. B. was directed to proceed to the coast of Portugal, there  
 III. to form a junction with the 5000 men afloat  
 1808. under Major General Spencer ; and then, at the  
 sailed 12th judgment of Sir Arthur, to land near the mouth  
 July. of the Tagus, or undertake such other operation  
 as should best tend to dislodge the French, reported by military agents accredited to the provisional government at Oporto, to be only fourteen or fifteen thousand in number. Before, however, the armament had reached its destination, it became known that Junot's force was far more considerable than had been represented : in consequence, arrangements were made for other corps, amounting to 18,000 men, to follow under Lieutenant Generals Sir Harry Burrard and Sir John Moore, senior officers to Sir Arthur ; the whole eventually to be commanded by General Sir Hew Dalrymple, ordered for that purpose from Gibraltar.

Sir A. Wellesley lands his army.

21st July.  
 24th.  
 26th.

Sir Arthur Wellesley preceded the transports in a frigate, and having, in a conference with the junta of Galicia at Corunna, the Bishop at Oporto, and Sir Charles Cotton off Lisbon, obtained pretty just notions respecting the strength of the French, judged it most prudent to make his debarkation at some distance from the capital, that his troops might not be seriously opposed in the operation, and that he might gain time to arm and organize an auxiliary force

from the Portuguese levies previously to fighting a general action. Mondego Bay, at the mouth of the river of that name, one hundred miles to northward of Lisbon, was in consequence selected, and the army began to land there on the 1st of August; but owing to a heavy surf, it was the 5th before every thing could be brought on shore. Two days subsequently the corps under Sir B. Spencer joined and disembarked, the two forming a little army of 14,000 infantry, 200 cavalry, and three brigades of artillery, with which Sir Arthur Wellesley advanced against Lisbon. At Leyria, a body of 6000 Portuguese troops from Oporto joined, but could not be prevailed upon to make a forward movement, unless supplied by the British with daily rations, which was impracticable.

CHAP.  
III.  
1808.

Sir B. Spencer joins.

Advance against Lisbon.

9th and 10th Aug.  
12th August.

Not shaken in his resolution by this discouraging circumstance, Sir Arthur continued his march by Calvaria and Alcobaça, unsupported by more than 1600 of the natives; and at Roliça, on the 17th, drove before him the French advanced corps under General Laborde.

Affair at Roliça.

Immediately on quitting the village, the main road passes over a range of heights, the front of which commencing on the right of the road, and extending far to the left, is perfectly precipitous, a few narrow difficult tracks alone communicating over it. General Laborde halted on the summit of the ridge, looking down upon

CHAP. the British in the plain beneath. To dislodge  
III. him without the loss which would certainly  
1808. attend an attack in front, General Ferguson,  
with 3000 men, was directed to turn his right,  
and a Portuguese corps of 1200 men was  
directed to penetrate to his rear by a wide  
movement on his left; columns under Major  
General Hill, Crauford, Nightingall, and Fane,  
being in the meanwhile assembled in the plain  
to rush up the passes as soon as he should be  
shaken. Either the march of the flanking corps  
occupied a longer time than was calculated, or  
the attack in front was made earlier than in-  
tended, as the passes were carried before the  
enemy discovered the danger which threatened  
their rear. The 9th and 29th Regiments on a  
front never exceeding six men, forced up a  
difficult path between the rocks, vigorously and  
skilfully disputed by the enemy's advanced  
parties, and first formed on the summit. Gene-  
ral Laborde quickly rallied the defenders, and  
made a desperate attempt to dislodge the two  
battalions: this effort proving insufficient, he  
repeated the attack with a larger force, and being  
again repulsed, a third time unsuccessfully ad-  
vanced against them; when, after two hours  
fierce contention, the flanking columns making  
their appearance, he hastily retired through the  
pass of Torres Vedras to Montachique, leaving  
his artillery on the field. From the very great



strength of the ground, the victors lost in this affair above 400 in killed and wounded, amongst the former, Lieutenant Colonel Lake of the 29th Regiment, who fell at the head of his battalion whilst contesting the summit of the enemy's position.

CHAP.  
III.  
1808.

General Loison, with his corps, was within a day's march of General Laborde at the time of the action, and had only been prevented from previously effecting his junction by finding, on his arrival at Thomar, that the British had preceded him at Leyria; in consequence of which he made the detour of Santarem on Torres Vedras, where he arrived on the 18th.\*

Sir Arthur did not pursue the retiring force on a road which would have led him from the sea, but moved to his right through Lourinha, and took post at Vimiera, to open a communication with the fleet, and cover the landing of the expected reinforcements, which from the rockiness of the coast, and exposed situation of its bays, open to the unchecked roll of the Atlantic, was a measure of extreme difficulty and hazard.

Subsequent  
operations.

\* General Loison's march.

12th, Torres Novas.

13th, Santarem.

15th, Alcoentre.

17th, Cercal.

18th, Torres Vedras.

*Rélation par le Lieutenant Général Baron Thiébault.*

CHAP. Four thousand men under Major General An-  
 III. struther were, however, by the skill of the navy,  
 1808. thrown ashore with little loss at Maceira, and  
 having joined the army on the 20th, and twelve  
 days' provisions having been collected, orders  
 were given to advance on Ponte do Rol to turn  
 the pass of Torres Vedras, where the French  
 were concentrating all their force.—The same  
 evening Sir Harry Burrard arrived off the coast  
 in a ship of war, and Sir A. Wellesley, having  
 gone on board and submitted to him his in-  
 tention of moving the army forward in the  
 morning, was directed to keep the troops on the  
 ground they then occupied till the arrival of the  
 corps under Sir John Moore.

Battle of  
 Vimiera.

Vimiera stands nearly at the bottom of a  
 valley, at the eastern extremity of a considerable  
 height, which extends westward to the sea;  
 and on the opposite side of the valley to the  
 eastward are other heights, over which passes  
 the communication to Lourinha. In advance  
 of the town is a plateau, or table hill, more ele-  
 vated than the ground in its immediate front,  
 but which is completely looked down upon from  
 the heights on its right and left. The army  
 having halted at Vimiera for one night only,  
 and not expecting to be attacked, was disposed  
 as most convenient to the troops. Six brigades  
 bivouacked on the height to the westward;  
 the advanced guard under Brigadier General

Fane, composed of light troops, supported by the 50th Regiment of the line, was posted on the plateau near two windmills to cover the commissariat and artillery depots lodged in the town; the cavalry and reserve artillery were in the valley, and on the hills to the eastward were merely piquets of observation.

CHAP.  
III.  
1808.

At eight in the morning of the 21st, strong bodies of the enemy were observed forming on the road of Lourinha, with the evident intention of attacking the left of the British; to meet which, the brigades of Generals Ferguson, Nightingall, Acland, and Bowes, were successively moved across the valley, from the hill on the westward, to the hills on the eastward of Vimiera; the force on the plateau was augmented by the brigade of General Anstruther taking post on its right, and the remaining brigades were moved nearer to its support.—Then, in line of battle, the right was next the sea, but screened from a view of it by intervening heights, the centre was posted on the rising ground in front of the town, and the left on the hills to the eastward. The operations of the enemy commenced by the simultaneous advance of two principal columns of infantry, with cavalry and artillery; one of nearly 6,000 men, under General Laborde, against the left; the other of 5,000 men, under General Loison, along the valley to attack the advanced guard on the plateau, having a column

CHAP. of infantry and cavalry to cover its left flank,  
III. and one of its regiments marching in column on  
1808. its right to turn the defenders, and penetrate  
into the village by the church. The formidable  
body under General Loison marched forward  
with the most perfect steadiness, exposed to the  
well-directed fire of seven pieces of artillery,  
and of numerous riflemen posted behind the  
trees and banks, till on its near approach to the  
plateau, being much cut up by repeated dis-  
charges of round, grape, and spherical case shot,  
it faltered, and a confused fire opened from its  
ranks; still, however, it continued to advance,  
and had arrived within a few paces of the crest of  
the hill, when the 50th Regiment, under Colonel  
Walker, which stood opposed to it without other  
support than a single company of the rifle corps  
on its left, poured into it a destructive volley,  
and instantly rushing to the charge, penetrated  
one angle of the column, when it broke and  
turned.—General Acland's brigade, which was  
in march from the right to the left of the posi-  
tion, opportunely attacked the regiment march-  
ing in column to support its right flank, when  
in the act of entering the village by the church;  
and the cavalry, by a handsome charge, added  
to its discomfiture: all order was then aban-  
doned, the column became a mob, and in that  
state was pursued for nearly two miles to the  
plain beyond the woody tract, where a re-

serve of cavalry lent it support. Above 1000 men killed or severely wounded were left scattered over the ground, and seven pieces of artillery with 350 prisoners were secured.— Lieutenant Colonel Taylor, commanding the 20th Light Dragoons, particularly distinguished himself by the boldness with which he led on his regiment, and, with many of his men, fell gallantly contending with the enemy's reserve. The secondary column, intended to have supported Loison's attack, made so wide a movement to its left, that it was separately engaged by General Anstruther's brigade, and being charged with the bayonet, was also driven back with considerable loss.

The attack on the Lourinha road was nearly simultaneous with that of the plateau; the French, rapidly driving in the light troops, advanced with imposing boldness, but were checked by the steadiness of General Ferguson's brigade, which formed the first line, till the arrival of the other brigades; when, after some close and heavy firing of musquetry, they were charged with the bayonet, and pursued for a very considerable distance, losing a general officer, many men, and six guns. A body of grenadiers, late in the action, made a spirited attempt to regain the artillery lost by the column routed in the valley; but two battalions which had been posted for its protection, after a short retrograde movement to some

CHAP.  
III.  
1808.

CHAP. advantageous ground, formed into line, and  
III. charging with the bayonet, drove them back.

1808.

Thus repulsed in every offensive movement, the French formed a rear-guard of four regiments of cavalry, under protection of which they commenced their retreat, about noon, on Torres Vedras, leaving General Brenier, some hundred men, and twenty-one pieces of cannon, in possession of the victors, who, on their part, had to regret the loss of about 700 in killed and wounded.

Sir Harry Burrard arrived on the field during the action, and feeling highly satisfied with the dispositions made by Sir Arthur Wellesley, had the magnanimity not to assume the command till the French were repulsed; when, judging that a forward movement would be productive of no favourable result, from the superiority of the enemy in cavalry, and a belief that only a small part of their force had been engaged, he overruled a proposition made by Sir Arthur vigorously to follow up his success. It was urged to him in vain, that the right wing of the army which had not been engaged, being on the high road to Torres Vedras, whilst the greater part of the French army was considerably to the eastward of the road, should the British rapidly move forward they must inevitably gain that important pass before the French, and even probably precede them at Lisbon. These represen-

tations were attended with no effect, and it was decided that the troops should remain on the field of action without an effort to profit by their victory.

CHAP.  
III.  
1808.

The attack just narrated was made by General Junot in person, with nearly all the disposable force he could collect,\* about 12,000 infantry and 1200 or 1500 cavalry. After the action he halted in the defiles of Torres Vedras, causing it to be proclaimed at Lisbon that he had obtained the most splendid success, hoping by the deception to calm the extreme agitation of the populace, and repress open hostility, whilst he made an endeavour, by negotiation, to extricate himself from the perilous situation in which his defeat had placed him.

Sir Hew Dalrymple landed and joined the army on the field at Vimiera the morning after the action: a few hours subsequently a large body of the enemy's cavalry was observed approaching the outposts; the alarm of a general

22d August.

\* The remainder of his army was distributed as follows:—  
3,500 men in Peniché, Elvas, and Almeida,  
3,000 in hospital, or stragglers,  
2,000 on the left of the Tagus,  
1,000 embarked,  
1,000 garrison of forts right of the Tagus,  
2,400 castle of Lisbon,  
1,000 at Santarem.

*Rélation du Général Thiébault.*

CHAP. attack was given, and the whole line turned out  
 III. under arms. It, however, proved to be only a  
 1808. French general officer (Kellermann) with a flag  
 of truce, commissioned by Junot to negotiate  
 with the victors a convention for the evacuation  
 of Portugal by the French army.

French de-  
 mand to ne-  
 gotiate.

General Kellermann being ushered into the  
 presence of the Commander in Chief, and having  
 satisfactorily explained to him his object, Sir A.  
 Wellesley was directed to arrange the terms of  
 an armistice, and in the course of the day a pre-  
 liminary agreement was concluded between the  
 two parties, without any communication with  
 the provisional government, or with the Portu-  
 guese generals, by which it was stipulated that  
 the French army should not in any case be con-  
 sidered as prisoners of war; that all the indivi-  
 duals composing it should be transported to  
 France with their arms, baggage, and private  
 property, from which nothing should be ex-  
 cepted; that no Portuguese, or other resident in  
 Portugal, should be molested for his political  
 opinions, and that, after the departure of the  
 French, the port of Lisbon should afford the  
 protection of neutrality to the Russian squadron:  
 a suspension of hostilities to prevail during the  
 negotiation; the river Zizandra forming the line  
 of demarcation between the armies, but Torres  
 Vedras remaining unoccupied by either, and  
 forty-eight hours notice being required pre-

22d August.

Preliminary  
 agreement.



viously to breaking the armistice.—On communicating the agreement to Admiral Sir Charles Cotton, it was found that, by instructions from England, he could not assent to the stipulation in favour of the Russian fleet, and General Friere, commanding the Portuguese forces, implicitly obeying as a soldier, sent a confidential officer to represent his dissatisfaction at the terms, and to solicit their modification. The French negotiators, nevertheless, emboldened by the concession of such favourable preliminaries, temporized, bringing forward many additional demands, such as to take away two Portuguese ships of war, to have French troops in exchange for the Spanish prisoners; and pertinaciously insisting on an adherence to the article respecting the Russian squadron.—This procrastination, besides continuing to them the advantage of retaining possession of the capital and of the fortresses, on the chance of any favourable occurrence, hazarded the communication of the British army with the transports, from which they drew their subsistence, and also the safety of the ships themselves, lying at anchor off an iron-bound coast, without a friendly port; therefore, to bring them to a decision, Sir Hew caused it to be notified on the 25th, that, unless a negotiation were immediately acceded to, on the terms specified in an accompanying memorandum, he should consider the armistice at an end on the

CHAP.

III.

1808.

24th Aug.

French temporize.

CHAP. 28th; and he, accordingly, moved the troops  
 III. forward, and took possession of the pass of  
 1808. Torres Vedras on the 29th. This had an im-  
 Definitive mediate effect, as early next morning, the  
 treaty, agreement, duly signed, was forwarded to the  
 British head quarters. During the time thus  
 lost, the reinforcement under Sir John Moore  
 (Between completed its debarkation, increasing the British  
 the 25th and force to 32,000 men, yet, with a good faith cre-  
 29th Aug.) ditable to his country, Sir H. Dalrymple rati-  
 App. V. fied the definitive convention on the stipulated  
 ratified, basis, and permitted 24,000 men, with their  
 arms, baggage and artillery, unconditionally to  
 embark in transports for the ports between  
 L'Orient and Rochefort. Sir Charles Cotton,  
 by a separate treaty with Admiral Sinaiven, ob-  
 tained possession of the Russian squadron, to be  
 detained in England during the war: the crews  
 enjoying the full benefit of the convention and  
 being sent to Russia. On the 2d September,  
 the forts commanding the anchorage of the  
 Tagus, were delivered over to the British, and  
 on the 10th the castle of Belem: on the 12th.  
 carried into a division took up its bivouac on the Campo  
 effect. Santa Anna, sending a detachment to garrison  
 the citadel, considered measures of necessity to  
 prevent a popular tumult, as the French under  
 cover of the second article of the preliminary  
 agreement, and the fifth article of the conven-  
 tion, which guaranteed to them the removal of

all their private property, were packing up the church plate melted into bars, the valuables of the Prince Regent, the royal library, and the rarest articles of the Museum; they were also clandestinely embarking much valuable colonial produce, and secretly disposing of the contents of the public magazines; they were even enforcing payment of the revenue duties, and appropriating to their own use the money of individuals under litigation in the Deposito-publico. Those injured by this infraction of the treaty immediately forwarded most pressing memorials to the British commander for his interference, and in consequence, a commission, presided by Major General Beresford, had been formed at Lisbon, with directions to enforce the literal meaning of the convention, and restrain the robberies of the French.

CHAP.  
III.  
1808.

Improper  
conduct of  
the French.

App. 6.

3d Sept.

These officers acted with considerable firmness, and caused the restoration of many articles of plunder; but on the 15th, before they could ascertain the extent of the depredations committed, and whilst many things embarked were objects of discussion, a division of the French were permitted to sail, and it became a subject of delicacy as well as of difficulty to be more severe with the reduced number remaining.

On the day of the departure of the first French corps, the Spanish troops, prisoners on board the

15th.

## CHAP.

## III.

1808.

Lisbon rendered free.

22d Sept.

Spanish troops liberated and armed.

hulks, were disembarked, and the liberation of the country was announced by the display of the Portugueze standard: in the evening the town was brilliantly illuminated, and all minor grievances being forgotten in the exultation of the moment, a scene of unrestrained hilarity prevailed throughout the night in which Portugueze, Spaniards, and British, all seemed equally to participate. A few days afterwards presented an imposing and gratifying spectacle, in re-organizing and arming the Spaniards previously to their returning home: the day was fine, and numerous spectators of both sexes attended. The union and martial appearance of the troops of the three nations, with their standards and colours, the harangues of the officers, and the enthusiasm of the liberated captives, brought tears into the eyes of the beholders: not all, however, of delight—it recalled to the minds of many of the Portugueze, their nearest kindred, forming the army cajoled into France, who, overlooked in all the stipulations of the treaty, were left in hopeless bondage, and perhaps destined to fall by the very arms now distributing.\* On the 18th Sir Hew Dalrymple, in conformity

\* Many of these men perished in the retreat from Moscow, and a few even remained in the ranks of the French at the first capitulation of Paris.

with instructions from England, restored the government of the country to such members of the council of regency appointed by the prince on his embarkation, as had not openly attached themselves to the interests of the French. This was effected by a proclamation, which, setting aside the provisional government without the slightest mention, disgusted the members with all those who had been actively patriotic, and added a powerful host to the discontented. Indeed, as the remembrance of their sufferings under the French gradually wore off the minds of the Portuguese, the convention which liberated them became subject of general condemnation; never was any measure more violently or more generally reprobated. The generals and the constituted authorities on its first promulgation, protested in the most solemn and forcible manner against the neglect of the interests of their countrymen, manifested in several of its stipulations; and the indignation of the populace of Lisbon, at seeing their oppressors embark laden with the pillage of their churches, and carrying off in safety the fruits of their rapine and extortion, could only be repressed by the interposition of a British force. In England as well as in Portugal, the convention was generally deprecated; and the dissatisfaction felt by the government led to an investigation of its merits, by a court of

CHAP.

III.

1808.

Regency  
reinstated.Dissatisfac-  
tion of the  
Portuguese.Dissatisfac-  
tion in Eng-  
land.

CHAP. general officers\* which was directed to “in-  
 III. quire into the conditions of the said armi-  
 1808. stice and convention, and into all the causes  
 and circumstances, whether arising from the  
 previous operations of the army or otherwise,  
 which led to them, and into the conduct and  
 proceedings of the said Lieutenant General Sir  
 H. Dalrymple, and of any other officer or offi-  
 cers who may have held the command of the  
 troops in Portugal, and of any other person or  
 persons, as far as the same were connected with  
 the said armistice and convention, in order that  
 the said general officers may report touching  
 the matters aforesaid, for our better information,  
 and also with their opinion whether any and  
 what further proceedings should be had there-  
 upon.” Sir Hew Dalrymple and Sir Arthur  
 Wellesley, who had been called home for that  
 purpose, respectively entered into a full statement  
 of their proceedings, supported by the testimony  
 of various officers and official documents. The  
 members of the court, however, differing in opi-  
 nion, and there being no law for their guidance,  
 confined themselves to drawing up a summary  
 of the operations of the army, as detailed in evi-  
 dence before them, and having pointed out

1st Nov.  
 Court of  
 Inquiry.

14th Nov.

Its proceed-  
 ings.

22d Dec.

\* The members were, Generals Sir D. Dundas, Peter Craig, Lord Moira, and Lord Heathfield; Lieutenant-Generals Lord Pembroke, Nugent, and Nicolls.

many benefits derived from the convention, and declared that unquestionable zeal and firmness throughout had been exhibited by the several officers in command, submitted that no further military proceeding was necessary on the subject. His Majesty, not satisfied with their reserve, called for an express opinion—"whether the armistice was advisable in the relative situation of the two armies on the 22d of August; and if so, whether the terms were such as ought to have been agreed upon, and whether, when all the British forces were landed, it was advisable to form a convention, and, if so, whether the terms were such as ought to have been agreed upon." On the first point six approved and one (Lord Moira) dissented; on the second questions, four approved and three (Generals Nicolls, Lords Pembroke and Moira) disapproved, leaving the real merits of the transaction nearly as doubtful as previously to its re-consideration.

CHAP.  
III.  
1808.

27th Dec.

The King, therefore, abstaining from any observations upon the other parts of the convention, repeated his disapprobation to Sir Hew Dalrymple of those articles in which stipulations were made, directly affecting the interests of the Spanish or Portuguese nations. "His Majesty deeming it necessary that his sentiments should be clearly understood, as to the impropriety and danger of the unauthorized admission into military conventions, of articles of such a descrip-

CHAP. tion, which, especially when incautiously framed,  
III. may lead to the most injurious consequences.”

1808.

This formal declaration most unsatisfactorily closed the judicial proceedings on the convention; but, from the evidence detailed on the inquiry, and the experience of subsequent campaigns, it may be inferred, that after the favourable opportunity for crushing the French force which presented itself by instantaneously and vigorously following up the brilliant success at Vimiera was neglected, the interests of the Peninsula were consulted by entering on a treaty for the liberation of Portugal, and that the convention of Cintra would have been highly advantageous to the patriots' cause, had such conditions been imposed by the victors, as their advantageous situation rendered equitable, and would, without doubt, have commanded. It is not, however, attempted to be denied, but that, by a different line of proceeding, the French army might have been forced to surrender at discretion; its generals and its eagles might have been sent trophies to England, and Lisbon might have been unconditionally liberated: still, Almeida, Elvas, and St. Julien would long have resisted; the fleet would long have been interdicted the entry of the Tagus, and the army long retarded in its organization and equipment; which surely would have been to sacrifice time for brilliancy of victory, and solid advantages for splendour of triumph.



## CHAPTER IV.

*Exertions of the Spaniards individually—inefficient State of their Armies—Central Junta installed—its want of Energy and Authority—Re-inforcements to the French announced—arrangements of the Spaniards to oppose them—a British Force marches from Portugal, and a Corps lands in Galicia to their assistance—Military Force of France and England—Buonaparte enters Spain in person—Successive Destruction of the Spanish Armies at Zornosa, Burgos, Tudela and Somo Sierra—The British Commander reaches Salamanca—his Difficulties and Embarrassments—Buonaparte gains possession of Madrid—his subsequent Conduct.*

To revert to the affairs of Spain.—The enthusiastic movements of the people were not attended with those great results which had been so confidently anticipated. Innumerable volunteers continued everywhere to enrol themselves, and each province completed a considerable army; but as the different Juntas appointed the officers, and tenaciously retained the command of their respective levies, no general system was followed; and the interests of a gallant and zealous people were sacrificed to petty jealousies, and the incompetency of local governors. The exertions of the commonality merited a better fate, as the most moderate calculation will show that in the short space of four months, 170,000 combatants marched against the enemy; and

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

CHAP.

IV.

1808.

Inefficient  
state of the  
Spanish ar-  
mies.

Causes  
thereof.

when the number of recruits spread over the different provinces is taken into the account, it will be found that upwards of 200,000 individuals in that period voluntarily enrolled themselves, a force amply sufficient to have secured the independence of Spain, had it been rendered effective by proper equipments and organization. So different, however, was the case, that at no period were more than 50,000 men fully clothed and equipped, and when formed into armies they wanted every component part; having neither generals nor staff of experience, neither commissariat nor stores, surgeons nor medicines; being a mere body of infantry, with a disproportionately small artillery, and few cavalry; or rather, a collection of individuals urged forward by the best and most patriotic motives, but utterly incapable of acting together as a machine.

This ill-organized condition of the Spanish forces, arose chiefly from the nation being necessitated to make a prodigious effort at a time when her military establishments were, from long continued neglect, and the previous subtle policy of France, reduced to the lowest state of degradation and nullity; affording no foundation on which to rear her overstrained exertions. It also partly arose from the too great ardour and precipitancy of the Spaniards themselves. At the commencement of the war, the different provincial levies, when only half-clothed and

disciplined, were hurried forward by their respective generals, apprehensive of arriving too late to participate in the honour of expelling the enemy; and on approaching the scene of action, each finding himself unequal singly to commence the struggle, and objecting to combine for that purpose with a superior of another province, the whole became paralysed. The officers, too confident and too uninstructed to appreciate the advantage of withdrawing and perfecting the drill and discipline of their men, permitted this invaluable opportunity for improvement to escape; and the different corps remained in perfect inaction for two months, exposed to the cold and rain on the summit of the mountains bordering on Aragon and Biscay, to which, from their deficiency in cavalry, they were obliged to ascend for security. As no money could be obtained to purchase supplies, nor any authority existed to enforce requisitions, neither magazines nor hospitals could be formed; and the young troops were fast wearing down with hunger and disease, and their constancy and their ardour undergoing a severe trial, previously to the hour of exertion. Thus passed away the end of August and the whole of September, at the expiration of which the Supreme Government was installed, and assumed the chief direction of affairs. The choice of the Deputies had been made by the several Juntas from various motives: some

CHAP.

IV.

1808.

Supreme  
Govern-  
ment in-  
stalled.

CHAP.

IV.

1808.

Its composition.

were nominated to remove a domineering character; others as likely to be swayed in their opinions by their constituents, and a few from conscientious motives. The majority, however, were men of approved integrity, highly distinguished for talents and patriotism, and as they chose for their President the old Count Florida Blanca, who on account of his rigid and unbending principles had been an exile from the Court, since the ascendancy of Godoy, much was expected from the wisdom of their measures, as well as from the influence of their controlling authority. Their first proceedings, however, damped the general hope, as they revived various restrictions on the press, and restored much of its power to the inquisition. Their President, grown timid in retirement, had lost that energy which gained celebrity to his former administration, and age had rendered him averse to change.\* Under his cautious and feeble sway, subordination was never enforced. On every resolve there were so many formalities

\* It has been asserted that Count Florida Blanca, previously to quitting his estate, in Valencia, left a written declaration, exculpatory of his conduct in accepting the office of a Deputy to the Central Junta, as being a matter of state necessity contrary to his inclinations, and that he was not personally opposed to Joseph's Government. The anxieties attending the duties of President proved too much for the Count, and he sank under them in less than four months from entering on the office.

attended to, and so many opinions expressed, that days were consumed in useless ceremony, or frivolous debate,\* and it soon became evident that an assembly of thirty-four persons was rather a deliberative than an executive power, and that the Supreme Junta inherited all the defects of the provincial assemblies, without their local influence. Its authority being undefined, and its supremacy viewed with jealousy by the other Juntas, which continued to govern their several provinces, its rule was altogether too feeble for the crisis. Nor would it have been an easy matter to have established a government equal to the task of uniting and directing the efforts of the country to a speedy termination of the contest, as the very feelings and peculiarities of the people, which led them to brave the power of France, were almost an insuperable bar to their readily overcoming it. Every Spaniard, even the most enlightened, from a too exalted opinion of his own importance individually, and of the pre-eminent valour of his countrymen, regards all foreigners, particularly his enemies, with utter contempt. This self-sufficiency is aggravated by a blind confidence of success, arising from an habitual exaggeration in writing

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

Peculiarity  
of the Span-  
ish charac-  
ter.

\* Jovellanos, on their first meeting, was so struck with the incongruous appearance and manners of the members, that he exclaimed, "surely such an assembly of government has never been seen since the days of the thirty tyrants, at Athens."

CHAP.

IV.

1808.

26th Oct.

Want of  
power in the  
govern-  
ment.

and speaking on the national interests, in which they all indulge. Inflated narrations bear with them the simplicity of truth; and by an incredible facility of belief that pervades all classes, their hyperboles deceive each other, and even themselves. As they never, therefore, justly appreciate the danger which threatens them, all appeal to their apprehensions is vain; and they are equally intractable to advice or persuasion. The Central Government, instead of repressing the general presumption, and attempting to shake the fallacious confidence of the people, rather encouraged both, itself participating in the weakness of individuals, and by exaggerated statements of its force and means, deceiving its own commanders and its allies: to so great an extent was this carried, that at the moment they were receiving the most appalling accounts of the inefficiency of the different corps, from actual penury and want, they proclaimed their intention of augmenting the army to half a million of infantry, and 50,000 cavalry, and boasted of having the means of providing for their support: thus, partly from inexperience, partly from national prejudices, disappointing every hope that had been formed from their rule.

The peculiar circumstances of the country, even more than the failings or follies of the members, prevented the authority of the Supreme Junta from being beneficial. The proceeding admitted

by all to be most required in their military arrangements, was to obtain unity of action by the appointment of a Commander in Chief with extensive powers; but to effect this, it was necessary to have the concurrence of the several local governments, they alone having the means of paying and equipping the troops; as the considerable sums, and the immense quantity of arms, ammunition and stores supplied by England, in the first instance, having been given expressly for the use of particular provinces, they considered them their property, as also the produce of the taxes, which, since the proclamation of independence, had been paid into the provincial treasuries. The petty interests of the local governments were found too discordant to be united by the influence of the Supreme Junta in favour of an individual, and the armies, even after their installation, continued to be regarded more as distinct provincial corps than as national forces. Under these circumstances, being unable to annul the improper appointments of officers made by the local governments, they endeavoured to palliate the evil of a variety of incompetent chiefs, by placing those of neighbouring provinces under the orders of the senior in rank, and appointing a military council at Madrid to direct their operations, and be the medium of communication between the several corps. This arrangement, without producing a single amend-

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

## CHAP.

## IV.

1808.

Over-confi-  
dence of the  
nation.

Reinforce-  
ments to the  
French an-  
nounced.

Counter-ar-  
rangements  
of the Spa-  
niards.

ment of organization or discipline, added to the general confidence, and the new levies thus jumbled together, being styled, and probably believed to be, powerful armies, were, with a degree of temerity scarcely to be credited, pushed into contact with the French forces behind the Ebro, without mutual support, or the slightest common object in their movements, beyond a vague idea which each commander possessed, of encompassing and making prisoners an enemy whose very outposts he was unable to drive back. Nor did these elevated hopes abate, on ascertaining by a dispatch, intercepted early in October, from the Governor of Bayonne, (naming the different battalions, their numbers, and the days appointed for their passage through his garrison,) that 72,000 additional enemies would cross the Pyrenees before the middle of November; it rather tended to urge forward the different generals, who, instead of falling back and concentrating their several armies, spread farther apart, and formed a still greater arc, the more surely to encircle the superior numbers about to be opposed to them.—The levies of Galicia, Asturias, Las Montañas, &c. amounting to 40,000 men, under General Blake, commanding in the north, advanced, subsequently to this knowledge, in front of Bilboa, and formed a separate army on the extreme left. Those of Andalusia, Castile, &c. 45,000 men, under Ge-



neral Castaños, crossed the Ebro near Tudela, and occupied a position in the centre, three days march distant from Blake's; whilst 20,000 Aragonese under Palafox, yet lower down the river, closed the right. In second line, covering Madrid, but far too distant to support the advance, were other separated bodies of troops amounting to more than 30,000 men, denominated the armies of reserve and of Estremadura. The whole force of Catalonia, 18,000 or 20,000 men,\* was occupied to blockade Figueras and Barcelona; and the veterans from the Baltic were left in the rear at Santander, till the arrival of the Marquis de la Romana, who had gone round by London, to consult with the British cabinet. Such were the dispositions made to oppose the first great effort of the gathering storm.

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

To aid and give consistency to these patriotic though ill-regulated exertions of the Spaniards, the British government, immediately on the liberation of Portugal, directed a force to assemble at Valladolid, to be composed of 20,000 men from the army at Lisbon, and of 13,000 men from England. The public voice obtained the chief command for Lieutenant General Sir John Moore, K. B. an officer of the highest re-

British army  
ordered to  
their assist-  
ance.

Sir J. Moore  
named to  
command—

\* These several numbers are given from the returns of the armies: the effective soldiers were probably not much more than half the amount.

CHAP. putation for gallantry and conduct in charge of  
 IV. a division, and for unremitting attention to the  
 1808. drill, discipline and comfort of the soldier.—

his instructions.

His instructions were, as commander of an auxiliary force, to use his utmost exertions to assist the Spanish armies in subduing and expelling the French from the Peninsula. He was however tied down to obey the Spanish commander in chief on all points, and only to communicate with the Spanish government through Mr. Frere, appointed minister at Madrid, to whose requisitions or representations he was enjoined upon all occasions to pay the utmost deference and attention. His command was made distinct and separate from that of Portugal, where 10,000 troops remained under Sir Harry Burrard, his senior officer; but he was directed to maintain a communication, and act in concert with Sir Harry, as might be best for his Majesty's service.

The corps from England, under Lieutenant General Sir David Baird, K. B. sailed from Falmouth early in October; but the force from Lisbon was not prepared to move till the end of that month. The infantry marched on Salamanca direct through Portugal; but, from an erroneous impression, that those roads were not practicable for artillery, that arm, with the cavalry and a guard of 3000 infantry, were sent round by Badajos and the Escorial,—an arrangement

which added 150 miles to their march, and created a third division of force, considerably retarding the period when the army might take part in the impending struggle, which it was expected would be so nearly balanced, as materially to depend on the timely arrival of the British. Indeed so little was the possibility of any serious reverse contemplated, that every defensive precaution was overlooked; not a single town or post was retrenched; not a dépôt formed, not a road destroyed, nor bridge mined; every thought was directed to the speedy annihilation of the enemy, and the dictates of experience and prudence were alike disregarded in the general delusion.

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

Mistaken  
notions on  
both sides  
respecting  
the contest.

The character of the war was equally mistaken by the hostile party: in the same degree that the friends of the Spaniards overrated the importance of their military exertions, did the intruders undervalue the national spirit which dictated them.

France, previously to entering on this contest, was rapidly attaining military supremacy over the continent. At a very early stage of the revolution, when her territory was invaded by a coalition of the surrounding states, the National Convention boldly decreed that every unmarried citizen above sixteen years of age was by birth a soldier, and liable to be called forward in defence of his country; the enthusiasm and

Military  
power of  
France and  
England.

CHAP.

IV.

1808.

danger of the moment produced a cheerful compliance:—the ranks of their armies were incessantly replenished with volunteers, and the invaders expelled:—succeeding governments, acting on this decree, reduced personal service into a compulsory system: the whole population was regularly classed, and, on the demand of the executive, ballotted for soldiers: neither high birth nor distinguished talent were permitted to excuse service in person or by substitute, and the power of recruiting became commensurate with the extent of the male population. At this time almost every man of a middle age in France had served as a soldier, and every youth felt that he was destined to do the same: the education, the habits and institutions of the country had all been remodelled to fit the rising generation for military knowledge and military obedience, and the conscription, acting on forty millions of people so trained, had grown into the most powerful engine of conquest mentioned in the annals of nations. Her disposable native force exceeded 520,000 infantry, 80,000 cavalry, and 50,000 artillery, independent of 470,000 national guards and gendarmerie, for internal defence. Her disposable auxiliary force amounted to 366,000: indeed every adjoining state permitted to retain a nominal independence, served as her vassals; and those beyond the Rhine moulded into a military confederation, were equally subservient

to her rising greatness. The power of Austria had been severely shaken: that of Prussia broken and enchained: Russia was in strict friendship. England scarcely entered into the calculation of continental preponderance: with no other system of recruiting her regular forces than that of voluntary enlistment, at a time when manual labour could command a high reward in agriculture, commerce, and the various pursuits of civil life; she also laboured under a most defective and heterogeneous military establishment, composed of militia, supplementary militia, local militia, fencibles, garrison battalions, volunteers, and other troops not available for general service, many of them being equally well paid with her regular army, and all opposed to its growth. With a force exceeding half a million of men under arms, her regular infantry scarcely numbered 130,000. These spread over the whole globe in numberless garrisons and colonies, left but an insignificant handful for offensive operations: nevertheless, from the commencement of the revolutionary war, on each succeeding coalition against France, instead of making one powerful effort to assist her allies, she had parcelled out her forces into small corps to act in distant quarters for distinct objects. Her exertions had been consequently everywhere feeble, and whatever the talents of her commanders, or the conduct of her troops, they had been obliged, after a first success, to

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

CHAP. quit the continent; which, invariably repeated  
IV. on each succeeding debarkation, had lowered  
the reputation of her arms, and was fast de-  
1808. priving her of all military consideration. Bu-  
naparte, apparently thus irresistibly powerful,  
despised what he considered merely a popular  
commotion; but irritated at the loss and dis-  
grace of his armies, and at the success of the  
English, he prepared to make a grand effort to  
reinstale Joseph. Having taken 80,000 troops  
of the Confederation of the Rhine into his pay,  
called out a levy of 160,000 conscripts, and ob-  
tained, in a personal interview with the Emperor  
of Russia at Erfurt, the promise of strict neu-  
trality in the event of the interference of  
Austria, he put columns in movement towards  
the Pyrenees from every quarter of his empire;  
and on the 25th October, in the plenitude of  
his power, thus arrogantly notified his intentions  
to the assembled councils of the state.—

“ A part of my army marches against those  
formed or disembarked in Spain.—It is a parti-  
cular favour of that Providence, which has  
always watched over our arms, that passion has  
so blinded the English, as to induce them to  
renounce the protection of the sea, and at length  
present their armies on the continent. I set out  
in a few days to put myself at the head of my  
forces, and, with God’s assistance, to crown the  
King of Spain in Madrid, and plant my eagles  
on the towers of Lisbon.”

In fact, on the 30th, he quitted Paris for that purpose, not doubting, by the destruction of the British, and by a most rapid termination of the war, to add to his personal fame, and retrieve the honour of his arms.

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

Previously however to his departure, in order to give a colour of moderation to his politics, and to sow the seeds of distrust between England and Spain, in furtherance of his military operations, he, conjointly with his friend, the Emperor of Russia, addressed a letter to the King of Great Britain, proposing to negotiate a peace, which should include the allies on both sides. George III. paying just attention to his own dignity and customary forms, caused an answer to be returned by his Secretary of State (Mr. Canning), requiring, as a preliminary to negociation, that the government of Spain should be acknowledged a party: this drew forth a reply, that King Joseph Napoleon alone would be permitted to send a negociator, the friends of England in that country being regarded by the two Emperors as insurgents. This insulting declaration brought the negociation to a close; and a statement of the discussion being submitted to the world drawn up with that candour and openness which so invariably distinguished the English state papers during this period of political tergiversation and fraud, made her good faith evident, and had the

12th Oct.  
Proposal to  
negociate a  
general  
peace.

CHAP. effect of more firmly uniting rather than shaking  
 IV. the bond of friendship between the two nations.

1808.

An artful proceeding to which Napoleon had recourse, to render the new enterprise popular with the troops, was attended with more success: whilst traversing their native country from Germany to Spain, they were everywhere received as triumphant conquerors, and by order of the government feasted at the public expense in every considerable town on their march: arches of triumph, public fêtes, congratulatory addresses, and speeches prepared for the occasion by each municipality, in praise of their former deeds, and of those they were about to achieve, were incessantly repeated till they were persuaded into a belief that they had but to show themselves to effect the conquest of the Peninsula.

Campaign  
 opens.

Action at  
 Zornosa.

Spanish  
 army totally  
 dispersed.

The campaign opened when the first division only had crossed the Pyrenees, in consequence of a movement made by General Blake beyond Zornosa with the intention of penetrating to the rear of Vitoria. Marshal Lefebvre attacked his centre briskly on the morning of the 31st October, and after some resistance drove it through Bilboa: the Spanish divisions on the flanks being too far distant to lend support to those engaged, took no part in the combat, but separately retired. The French actively followed up their victory, and in a succession of slight



encounters at Guenas, Valmaseda, and Espinosa, rendered the *déroute* so complete, that on the 14th November, when the Marquis de la Romana traversed the district of Las Montañas to assume the command, he met with nothing but a half-starved rabble, trusting to individual exertion for safety and support, and without even the semblance of a rear-guard to check their pursuers.—On reaching the almost inaccessible vallies near Renedo, where a supply of food could be obtained, the Marquis halted the fugitive mass for some days, and so far re-organized it, as to form a body of between 15 and 20,000 men, which he led through the mountains of Asturias, by the pass of Potes, to the plentiful country round Leon, being an eligible situation to re-establish the discipline of the troops, and from whence to co-operate with the British.

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

In these actions, the troops from the Baltic alone displayed firmness of conduct: injudiciously brought into action after the first discomfiture, at different periods and by single battalions, they bore the brunt of each affair, and a large proportion of those veterans were sacrificed. The new levies generally dispersed without waiting for the shock, and those who suffered bore a very small proportion to the number that escaped. The disorganization, however, was most complete; and without magazines,

CHAP. clothing, or money to refit the army, little could  
 IV. be hoped from its co-operation for many months.

1808. Early in November the French reinforcements, to the number of 100,000 men, had poured into Spain. Napoleon in person, with 12,000 of his guard, reached Vitoria on the 8th, and immediately pushed forward a corps under Marshal Soult, to dislodge the Estramaduran Army from his front. The young Count de Belvidere, who commanded the Spaniards, about 13,000 men, though aware of the superior numbers approaching, awaited the attack in an open

Buonaparte  
enters  
Spain.

Déroute of  
the Span-  
iards at  
Gamonal.  
10th Nov.

position at Gamonal: his forces, composed of young levies, dispersed on the first charge, abandoning colours, artillery, baggage, and stores of every kind: the fugitives, without any appearance of formation, poured into the town of Burgos, which the French entered pêle-mêle with them, and some resistance being attempted in the houses, the city, in consequence, suffered all the pillage and devastation attendant on being taken by assault. The Spaniards, in this affair, did not lose more than 2000 in killed and prisoners, nearly half the number being of the corps formed of students from the universities, whose spirit inducing them to stand the shock, they were almost totally destroyed. The rout, however, was so complete, that small parties of French cavalry patrolled immediately afterwards to Palencia and Valladolid without being opposed.

Napoleon advanced his head-quarters to Burgos the day after the action, where he remained till the 22d; and whilst apparently occupied with issuing decrees for the confiscation of wool and English merchandise, he caused the right of his army to spread over Leon, Castile and the Asturias, and with his left prepared the destruction of the Spanish armies on the Ebro. Marshal Lasne's corps d'armée of 25,000 men, was ordered to attack them in front from Lodosa, whilst the corps of Ney and Victor should manœuvre on Soria and Agreda in their rear. General Castaños, on the approach of Lasnes, abandoned Calahorra on the 22d November, and fell back on Tudela, where, overruled by the opinion of a civil commissioner, he was induced to offer battle on the following morning, on a range of easy heights of more than four miles front. The Aragonese forces which joined by forced marches a few hours before the action commenced, were placed on the right; those of Valencia and New Castile in the centre, and those of Andalusia on the left; the artillery, consisting of forty pieces, was spread along the whole line.

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808:

Destruction  
of the ar-  
mies of An-  
dalusia and  
Aragon.

23d Nov.

The opportunity which offered for destroying the Spanish army being too favourable to be played with, the attack commenced as the heads of the columns arrived on the ground, and the centre of the position being in a moment

CHAP.

IV.

1808.

forced by a division of French infantry, the cavalry penetrated through the opening, and, wheeling up to their left, enveloped the right wing of the Spaniards. As soon as this manœuvre was accomplished, the Spanish left was attacked in front: a body of men occupying the town of Cascante, as an advanced post, offered some resistance; but, being quickly driven back, the line dispersed, and the whole army took to flight, abandoning their guns, waggons and baggage. The fugitives of the right threw themselves into Zaragossa, there to prove, by one of the best defences on record, that want of discipline and experience, not want of courage, had led to their discomfiture: those of the left, less fortunate in a place of refuge, hurried through Agreda, where luckily the corps of Marshal Ney did not arrive till the 25th, and was too late to intercept their flight: they were, however, closely pursued into Valencia, till not even the appearance of an organized body was preserved, so that a single day's action brought the armies of the right and centre into a similar, or worse state, than those of the left.

Only a corps of reserve, about 18,000 men, now remained in the field—it was entrenched with great labour in a strong pass, where the great road crosses the Somosierra, and fifteen pieces of cannon were advantageously placed on the highest part of the ridge to flank the ascent; nevertheless the road was forced by the Polish

Passage of  
the Somo-  
sierra.

30th Nov.

Lancers almost as soon as the attack began, and the defenders fled to the banks of the Tagus. At Talavera they rallied, and made an effort to return to the defence of the capital; but on their approach were, a second time, dispersed by a few cavalry. Shortly afterwards, to shift from themselves the odium of their slight resistance and double flight, they accused their chief, St. Juan, of treason, sacrificed him without a trial, and suspended his body from a tree, in terror to other commanders.

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

Buonaparte lost not a moment to profit by the state of surprize and distrust into which this rapid succession of disasters threw the Spaniards: detaching Marshal Moncey to blockade Zaragossa, and leaving a corps under Marshal Soult on the borders of Leon, to observe Galicia, he rapidly advanced in person, with 50,000 men, to complete his triumphs by the reduction of Madrid, and on the 2d of December his troops bivouacked within sight of its walls.

French advance to Madrid.

The British had not, as yet, interfered with his operations. The equipment of the corps at Lisbon occupied so much time, that, before it moved, the French reinforcements were crossing the frontier, and the left wing under Sir David Baird, besides having been delayed a week in its debarkation, for want of orders to the local government to receive the troops, found such difficulty in obtaining supplies at Corunna, that

Operations of the British.

CHAP. the last division did not march from thence till  
 IV. the 13th November, long after the enemy had  
 1808. decided the fate of the campaign. Both corps

Sir J. Moore  
 reaches Sa-  
 lamanca,

14th Nov.

his difficul-  
 ties and em-  
 barrass-  
 ments.

advanced almost destitute of money, trusting to the weak rule and slender resources of the Supreme Junta to establish magazines, and provide means of transport for them, in addition to their own forces: their movements, more particularly those of the corps traversing Galicia, were, in consequence, incessantly retarded and embarrassed for want of supplies. Sir John Moore reached Salamanca, with the infantry from Portugal, on the 13th November, and the next day was made acquainted with the dispersion of the Estramaduran army, and of the entry of the French into Valladolid, on which he notified to the Provincial Junta, his decision to fall back on Ciudad Rodrigo; but ascertaining immediately afterwards, by a reconnoissance, that the enemy's advanced corps had withdrawn from his front, he fixed his head-quarters in the town, and made it the point of union of his forces. All Sir John Moore's arrangements having been formed on a belief that the Spanish armies would prove a shield and protection to the assembly of his forces, the defeat of Blake, which he only learnt on the 18th November, deranged his plans, and rendered the junction of his separated divisions very precarious. From that moment, he lost all hope of

being useful; but placed as a centre between the wings of his army, neither of which he could approach without hazarding the other, he remained unwillingly, at Salamanca, an inactive expectant of the course of events, with the vexation of knowing that the disjointed state of his forces might have been avoided, by a due examination of the roads through Portugal, as, on the march, they were found practicable for both cavalry and artillery. Under these circumstances, every thing tended to irritate and perplex the British commander.

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

The extreme incorrectness of common rumour perverting every thing to the national advantage, and the slow communication of intelligence, which had left him so much longer than need have been, in ignorance of transactions affecting the safety of his army, seemed like disingenuous concealment; whilst the boasting and hyperbolic language of the government had the appearance of studied deceit. He now, by degrees, obtained a just notion of the Spanish armies, and discovered that they were composed of recruits, officered by men equally inexperienced with themselves; that the government without a revenue, had not the means of regularly equipping or feeding their forces, and that, consequently, his army was the principal, rather than an auxiliary corps.

The want of a Commander in Chief, and of a

CHAP. settled plan of operations, added to his embar-  
 IV. rassments on this point; but justified by his in-  
 1808. structions in considering himself merely an

auxiliary, and cherishing no hope of success, he declined to hazard his reputation by accepting the chief command,\* or even by proposing any general military arrangement. The sanguine expectations of those, to whose opinions he was instructed to pay attention, was another source of perplexity, as at the very moment (27th November) of submitting the question to the British envoy, whether his army should remain to be attacked, or retire from the country, he received from him and the Junta the most pressing entreaties to advance for the protection of the capital, or to unite with the Spanish armies in the centre of the kingdom, with assurances that a retreat on Portugal would sink the hearts of the whole population: his mind being impressed with a strong feeling of distrust of the Spanish rulers, utter contempt of their officers, and a far too exalted opinion of the French military, these communications were regarded by him as the ravings of presumptuous ignorance; or the suggestions of wily treason. Like Napoleon, he altogether undervalued the national

\* "The Spaniards offered the supreme command of their armies to Sir John Moore: Mr. Stuart was present when this offer was made by M. Caro to the British general, and was declined."—*Extracted from a despatch from Mr. Canning to Marquis Wellesley, dated 12th Aug. 1809.*



spirit of the inhabitants, and considering the contest as solely dependant on the regular forces, was struck with just apprehension at the disparity of the numbers, and despairing of making any effectual resistance, either in the defiles of Galicia or in the mountains of Portugal, limited his hopes to safely re-embarking his army. Therefore, on becoming acquainted, on the 28th November, with the defeat and dispersion of Castaños' and Palafox's forces at Tudela, as the corps under Sir David Baird had not passed Astorga, (having, through false intelligence of the enemy being in force at Rio Seco and Ampudia, lost several days, by a retrograde march to Lugo) he sent orders to that officer to retire on Corunna and embark for the Tagus: at the same time he prepared his own force to fall back on Lisbon, the moment that the junction of his cavalry and artillery should be assured, and sent to England, demanding transports for their reception.

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

decides to  
retire on  
Lisbon.

28th Nov.

On the other hand, the disasters fallen on the Spanish armies had only stimulated the British government to greater exertions: four thousand cavalry and horse artillery had been embarked in the course of November to reinforce the army, and five thousand infantry were put under the orders of Major General Sherbrook to follow: on the requisition for transports just mentioned, the former were reluctantly disembarked,

Exertions of  
the British  
ministry.

CHAP.

IV.

1808.

Exertions in  
Portugal.

and the sailing of the latter countermanded. A brigade had also been ordered from Lisbon, and strenuous endeavours were making to organize a Portuguese army, and admit of the remainder of the British moving to the scene of operations.

The population of Portugal exceeds two millions eight hundred thousand, and every male under sixty years of age is, by the constitution of the country, regimented under the command of a Capitão Mor (Lieutenant Colonel), named by the sovereign, usually the chief landed proprietor in the district, and is periodically drilled to the use of arms, expressly for the defence of the town or village he inhabits. In time of war, by a stretch of arbitrary power, he is subjected, at the selection of the Capitão Mor, to be sent under an escort to join any particular corps; from which the military code restrains him from deserting under the penalty of death. No difficulty, therefore, was found in raising men: but in the impoverished state of the country, funds were wanting to equip and pay beyond a very limited number. The British Cabinet, vigilantly active to strengthen their military means, on becoming acquainted with this state of things, empowered Mr. Villiers, their minister, to make advances for the equipment and subsistence of ten thousand Portuguese troops, promising to increase their donation as greater numbers should be organized and officered. It

22d Nov.

is worthy of observation, as showing the feeling of the moment, and how much the martial character of a people is subject to be affected by the greater or less energy of its government, that the policy of this subsidiary measure was generally doubted; it being gravely argued, that a Portugueze could never be brought to face a Frenchman: even the British war minister, although he had embarked 52,000 men in support of the cause, sought an opinion, and was answered in the negative, whether they might hope, in conjunction with the Portugueze forces, to defend Portugal, should the campaign prove disastrous in Spain.

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

25th Nov.

Sir John Moore's decision to retire from Salamanca was viewed by the Spaniards as a premature abandonment of their cause; and Mr. Frere, the British minister to the Junta, led away by the inflated language of those around him, and persuaded that the appearance of the British would change the face of affairs, outstepped the bounds of his situation, and used language almost amounting to command, to induce him to change his determination and advance towards the capital: the British cabinet also expressed itself very averse to a retrograde movement; public opinion was decidedly against it; and murmuring pervaded all ranks of the army: a proper confidence, however, in his mi-

CHAP. litary judgment for a time supported him in his  
IV. resolution against the general wish.

1808.

Opinions  
respecting  
Madrid.

1st Dec.

All attention was now fixed on Madrid as a last hope; and though the Junta had early withdrawn for safety from Aranjuez to Badajos, a long and determined resistance was expected, the extent of preparation for defence by the populace being diligently proclaimed by the friends of the cause. These, in the language of enthusiasm, confidently predicted that the exertions of the citizens would surpass those of the Aragonese; not sufficiently considering the different feeling which actuates an inhabitant of the chief town of a province, and the inhabitant of the capital of an empire. The former, individually known, has personal importance to preserve, and local interests to cherish and maintain; whilst the latter, undistinguished in the multitude, considers himself merely a citizen of the state, and feels that neither his character nor his personal fame are more compromised by the conduct of the capital than those of all his fellow subjects; besides, half the population of Madrid is composed of the wealthy and idle, or their dependants, and such are little able to stand fatigue, or tranquilly to face danger. These reflections seem, however, not to have escaped the government, as, besides 6000 troops of the line, they introduced 10 or 15,000 peasants from the neighbouring villages; so that

the embodied citizens amounted to little more than a moiety of the 50,000 armed men, collected within the walls. From the moment that the approach of the enemy became known, the populace worked with extreme ardour in blocking up the streets, cutting ditches, and raising temporary defences; but, indignant that their chiefs had not earlier called forth their exertions, they suspected their integrity, and, on the ridiculous charge of having caused the powder in their cartridges to be alloyed with sand, murdered the respectable Marquis de Perales, and ferociously dragged his body along the principal streets, to evince their power and determination. This spirit giving hope of a protracted resistance, the military council wrote pressinglly to Sir John Moore to advance to their assistance,\* and made

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

2d Dec.

\* Mr. Frere also wrote to the same effect to Sir J. Moore, from Aranjuez, on the 3d December, offering to take upon himself any degree of responsibility which might attach to his advice, and sent his letter by Colonel Charmilly, an emigrant French officer in the service of England, who had quitted Madrid on the previous evening, and had witnessed the preparations making for defence. Colonel Charmilly was desired to state to Sir J. Moore what he had seen; and should his representation, in support of Mr. Frere's request, fail to induce Sir John to change his determination to retire, he was provided with a second letter, in an official style, to deliver, requesting that he, Colonel Charmilly, might be examined before a council of war, previously to the army being put into retreat. Colonel Charmilly arrived at Salamanca on the 5th instant, soon after Sir J. Moore had received the letter from the military council, and

CHAP. arrangements to concentrate the remains of the  
 IV. different Spanish armies for the same purpose.

1808. Buonaparte, instructed by experience, formed a right judgment of his opponents, and did not by a close investment force them to an obstinate resistance: on the contrary, leaving many of the communications with the country perfectly free, he collected the chief part of his force on the heights on one side of the city, where he erected formidable batteries, and from whence he carried


being admitted to an audience, was listened to with attention, and politely bowed out. Sir J. Moore, on consideration of these various communications, thinking that matters had taken a favourable turn, and being bound, by his instructions, to attend to the requests of the British minister, decided to make a forward movement, and wrote early on the 6th to Sir David Baird, to countermarch his corps. These orders were given with due secrecy, and being unknown to the officers of the staff, the conversation of the morning turned on the meditated retreat; which making Colonel Charmilly think the moment arrived for using the second letter entrusted to him, he went to headquarters, and, obtaining an audience, delivered the dispatch. Sir J. Moore, with reason, felt indignant in the extreme at this attempt to controul his actions, by means of the officers under his command; but immediately afterwards suppressing his personal feelings, out of respect for Mr. Frere's dignity of minister, he wrote to him, explaining his conduct and views, and stating that he had suspended his retreat. Thus far, every one must cordially join in approbation of Sir J. Moore's actions on this trying occasion; but, unluckily, the same dignity did not attend his treatment of the innocent agent of the minister, Colonel Charmilly, as he sent him an order on the same day, through the Adjutant General, to quit the cantonments of the army.

on an attack against the Retiro, which partook too much of the scientific combination of regular warfare, for a populace successfully to oppose. The enceinte, being little more than a garden wall, was quickly breached, when the post being carried by storm, the defenders were put to the sword, and the French immediately pushing on, gained possession of the china manufactory, the great barrack, the hotel of Medina-Celi, and other buildings commanding the entry of some of the principal streets.

CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

3d Dec.

Madrid, although crowded with religious edifices, is nearly destitute of those immense monastic buildings erected by the zeal of the middle ages, the walls of which, of great height, and incredible solidity, render them easily convertible into posts, secure against assault or cannon; and the number and strength of which at Zaragossa inspired the citizens with confidence, and formed the chief scenes of their celebrated resistance. Further, being without suburbs, the interior is closely occupied, and the probability of a siege had been too tardily contemplated to admit of space being cleared and solid military works erected, so that scarcely a secure post existed within the walls. The precariousness of an internal defence was evident to all, and many of the peasants sought safety by an immediate return to their homes, on which the most timid of the citizens, dis-

CHAP. IV.  1808.   
 Madrid capitulates.   
 encouraged, and fearing a repetition of the dreadful second of May, opposed the wishes of the more courageous to make further resistance. Treachery was then suspected; frightful insubordination followed; and, to prevent a general massacre, a capitulation was concluded, which, on the 4th December, put the French into possession of the capital.

General Morla, the late governor of Cadiz, who had for some time presided in the military council, negotiated the capitulation; and, as he subsequently preferred rank and safety under Joseph Buonaparte's government, to a fate similar to that of St. Juan and other unsuccessful commanders, which he had too much reason to apprehend from the violence of a disappointed, though not humiliated soldiery, a long course of active treachery has been laid to his charge. Unless, however, some strong proof of it can be adduced, his former conduct, and the little possibility of a protracted defence of the town after the first success of the enemy, ought to plead for his acquittal. His actions certainly fell far short of that unbending firmness, the confidence reposed in him demanded, and his acceptance of service under the intruder, admits of neither palliation nor excuse; and for so doing, the name of Morla, even without the addition of previous treason, must go down to posterity as that of an unworthy Spaniard.



The occupation of the town was quietly effected, according to the terms of the convention, and the inhabitants disarmed. Napoleon then endeavoured to forward his cause by means of the press, which had hitherto so constantly seconded his exertions. He issued decrees abolishing the inquisition, suppressing two thirds of the convents, abrogating feudal and seignorial rights, repealing every internal duty, and suppressing all farmers of the revenue. The value of these changes he pointed out to the people, in a proclamation which concluded with a denunciation that, if the liberal constitution intended for them under the mild sway of his brother should be resisted, he would treat Spain as a conquered country, and place the crown on his own head, when, as God had endowed him with the necessary strength and resolution, he would know how to make his will respected. This threat, and the presence of his overpowering forces, obtained a ready acquiescence in all the proceedings he deemed necessary to support the delusion he had created in France respecting the feelings and wishes of the Spanish nation, and addresses from the nobility, clergy and citizens were procured, supplicating for the return of their dearly beloved king Josèph. These were published in the Madrid Gazette, with the acquiescence of Napoleon, conditionally, that a written declaration of obedience and fidelity to

CHAP.

IV.

1808.

Conduct of  
Buonaparte  
towards the  
citizens.

7th Dec.

Dated 9th  
Dec.  
Presented  
15th.

CHAP. the new dynasty, voluntary and without mental  
IV. reservation, should be previously signed by each  
1808. chief of a family in Madrid; and a little later it  
was exultingly announced that 25,000 citizens  
had gone through the solemn mockery of rendering their fealty sacred by sealing it with an oath in presence of the most holy sacrament. Those distant from the scene, and having no source of information but the French press, could not feel otherwise than persuaded that the capital at least received Joseph with sincerity of heart. Indeed it is difficult to conceive how the obligation of an oath can be dispensed with, and on what principle most of those who swore fealty to Joseph, considered their allegiance as binding only whilst under the control of the French troops: the fact however is indisputable—to be sure with the Spaniards at this time, attachment to the cause of Ferdinand and established forms was considered a paramount duty, and, perhaps, the practice of their religion admits of a two-fold reservation. Satisfied with their condition, their minds were not prepared to regard any great change otherwise than as a compulsory grievance. The restricted nature of their diurnal publications, and the prohibition of foreign polemical writings, had lost them the habit of controversy, and of exerting their judgment on political subjects. They were, from the same causes, profoundly ignorant of the institutions of other

countries; their national vanity led them to suppose their own amongst the best, and they considered the attempt to change their laws, equally an insult and an injury. Napoleon in consequence gained not an additional friend, nor the slightest compensation, for three invaluable weeks, which, contrary to his usual habits, he sacrificed in the promulgation of his decrees and promises; unless, as seems probable, that, elated with the overthrow of Blake's army, which was effected earlier than he had planned, he had prematurely commenced his grand operations, and now found it necessary to suspend his conquests till the junction of the 5th and 8th corps d'armée with a numerous cavalry, at this period only entering the country.

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CHAP.  
IV.  
1808.

## CHAPTER V.

*General Disbelief of the Surrender of Madrid—Sir John Moore advances to its Succour—is apprised of its Surrender—plans an Effort to cut off a French Corps at Saldanha—is nearly surrounded in the Attempt—saves his Army by a rapid March on Galicia—continues his Retreat to Corunna—the Army repulse their Pursuers in front of the Town—embark without Molestation—further Losses and Disasters of the Spaniards—Heroic Defence of Zaragossa.*

CHAP. V. THE capitulation of Madrid, after only three days resistance, was too humiliating and disastrous an event to obtain credit amongst the Spaniards, and a most extraordinary deception relative to it spread all over the Peninsula. The belief that the town continued to resist after the fall of the Retiro was universal: from the member of the Junta to the peasant, every man repeated it. So strong was this impression, that although Sir John Moore was aware of a considerable reinforcement being on the march from France through Navarre, yet shaken in his opinions by the accounts of the enthusiasm said to be displayed, added to the representations of the military council and those of Mr. Frere,\* he was induced, on the 6th of December, to countermand the retreat of Sir D. Baird's force; and, after the junction of his artil-

Sir J. Moore  
advances to  
succour  
Madrid;

12th Dec.

\* See Note, page 31.

lery and cavalry, was actually in movement from Salamanca on Valladolid, to threaten the communications of the French as a diversion in favour of the heroic defenders of the capital; when, at Alaejos, on the 14th of December, an intercepted dispatch from the French head-quarters made known to him its surrender; the subsequent advance of a French corps on Talavera de la Reyna to threaten Lisbon; the belief of Buonaparte that the British were in full retreat, and an order given under that impression to Marshal Soult to advance from Saldanha with 16,000 men, and drive the Spaniards into Galicia. By these dispositions, the force under Soult being left without any immediate support, there appeared a chance of annihilating it by a rapid and unexpected manœuvre. Sir John Moore, driven to attempt something by the clamours of the public, the remonstrances of the British envoy, and the impatient spirit of his army, decided contrary to his own judgment, as recorded at the moment, to make the experiment. With that view he moved to his left, and formed a junction with Sir D. Baird, on the 21st of December, at Toro,\* from whence, having previously arranged with the Marquis de la Romana to make a

CHAP.  
V.  
1808.

learns its  
surrender.

Plans the  
attack of a  
corps at  
Saldanha;

\* The united force mustered, according to the Adjutant-General's return, 29,360 effective. Mr. Moore in his Narrative, p. 108. states, that he has ascertained the precise number of effectives to have been only—Cavalry, 2,450, Infantry, 25,631, with fifty pieces of artillery, including a brigade of 3-pounders.

## CHAP.

## V.



1808.

advances  
with that  
view.

simultaneous movement on the enemy's right with 10,000\* of the most efficient of the Spaniards, he directed a general advance on the 23d. The weather had previously changed to piercing frost, with heavy falls of snow; and the villages afforded very insufficient accommodation for the officers or men; but anxiety to come into action, caused every inconvenience to be disregarded, and the army, until this period, presented an appearance of discipline and good order rarely seen in the field. One common feeling of hope and exultation now filled every breast. Already had the cavalry distinguished itself by some dashing affairs with the French piquets, and the infantry, burning with emulation, was moving in the highest spirits from Villada and Sahagun, to the attack of the enemy's main body, behind the Carrion, when, about ten at night, undoubted information was received that Buonaparte had changed the whole arrangement of his force; that the corps from Talavera was in march on Salamanca; that 35,000 men, headed by himself in person, had moved on the 22d from the Escorial, on Benavente; and that Soult's corps, reinforced, was directed to advance on Astorga through Leon, showing a combined operation for surrounding the British, which it required the most judicious

23d Dec.

Ascertains  
that Buona-  
parte is in  
movement  
with his  
whole force.

\* When the moment arrived for making the exertion, only 6,000 were found capable of it.

measures to counteract. The columns of attack were instantly countermarched, and the troops sent back to their quarters, with orders to be in readiness to retreat at day-light. The deadening effect produced by this unexpected resolve is not to be described; a few murmurs only were heard, but every feeling was changed, and they, who, the instant before, were elated with that confidence which ensures victory, were at once deprived of all heart and hope. Ignorant of the pressing necessity for retreat, they imputed it to irresolution and vacillation in their chief, and much subsequent misconduct arose from the distrust it occasioned.

CHAP.  
V.  
1808.

To fall back on Portugal being no longer practicable on account of the enemy's corps marching on Salamanca, it was decided to retire on Vigo, and the transports were ordered to assemble at that port. At day-light on the 24th, the army marched in two columns, and with much good arrangement was leisurely passed over the Esla, the right at the ferry of St. Juan, and the left by the bridge of Benavente; the army of the Marquis de la Romana crossing at Mansilla. On the 26th the whole of the troops assembled at Benavente, without having experienced other inconvenience than that produced by exposure to constant rain and the fatigue of marching by cross country-communications, over swampy meadows or along the muddy banks of rivers. Nevertheless, this

Falls back  
towards  
Vigo.  
24th.

CHAP.

V.

1808.

Irregular  
conduct of  
the troops.

27th Dec.

movement was marked by acts of great irregularity, and the general discontent was so openly expressed, as to draw from the Commander in Chief an expostulatory order, wherein, after strongly censuring the misbehaviour of particular corps, and stating the impossibility of explaining the motives of every movement he might direct, he assured the army that all their marches hitherto had been foreseen by him, and that when it was proper to fight a battle, he would do so, and he would choose the time and place he thought most fit; in the mean while, he begged the officers and soldiers to attend to their own duties, and to leave to him, with the general officers, the decision of measures belonging to them alone. After the halt of two days at Benavente to admit of a convoy of artillery stores joining, which had failed in an attempt to cross at the ford of St. Juan, the bridge over the Esla was destroyed, and the main body, detaching a light corps of 3,500 men without artillery by the road of Orense, continued its retreat in two columns, and crossing the Orbigo at the bridges of Vizana and Cebrones, concentrated at Astorga. The morning after the infantry had evacuated Benavente, the hussars, under Lord Paget and General Stewart, had a most brilliant rencounter with 5 or 600 cavalry of the Imperial Guard, that forded the Esla close to the ruined bridge. The piquets, watching the banks of the river,

28th.

29th.

Affair of  
cavalry.



on the approach of the enemy, united into a body, under Colonel Otway, and slowly retiring, made several spirited attempts to check the pursuit; at length the 10th Hussars came up in line to their support, and joining in a furious charge, the French gave way and were driven into the river, with the loss of 120 in killed, wounded, and prisoners, amongst the latter, General Lefebvre Desnouettes, Colonel of the Chasseurs of the Guard. From the prisoners it was ascertained that the head-quarters of the corps from the Escorial had passed the preceding evening at Villalpando, a village only sixteen miles distant.\* The danger of being overpowered was consequently imminent, and to prevent it, the most rapid marches became necessary to reach Villa Franca, ninety miles distant from Benavente, where the road enters a stupendous defile, and winding through it for many miles, renders a superiority of cavalry of little value, and places in comparative security the flanks of a retiring force.—The army of the Marquis de la Romana, which had hitherto been in advance at Leon, having the mountains of Asturias in its rear, the passes over which were

CHAP.  
V.  
1808.

Romana's  
army  
crosses the  
British.

\* According to the 21st French bulletin—On the 28th of December, Buonaparte's head-quarters were at Valderas, Soult's at Mansilla, Ney's at Villafer.

30th. Buonaparte was at Benavente.

31st. Soult entered Leon.

1st of January. Buonaparte arrived at Astorga.

CHAP. blocked up with snow, had no alternative, on  
V. the approach of Soult, but to join the British  
1808. line of march at Astorga. The town was equally  
divided between the two armies, but the assembly of such a large force caused much embarrassment to both, increasing the demand for provisions and the means of transport, far beyond what the inhabitants could furnish.

Astorga had been made a principal depôt of arms and ammunition, and the camp equipage of Sir D. Baird's corps had been deposited there; as these could not possibly be removed without creating a fatal delay, the whole were very properly destroyed, or distributed to the Spanish troops, many of whom were without weapons of any sort. Indeed, they presented a frightful example of the sufferings attendant on a disastrous winter campaign, without arrangement or supply. The soldiers under arms little exceeded in number the sick borne on cars or mules, and as they slowly passed along, emaciated and enfeebled by disease, the procession had much more the appearance of an ambulatory hospital in need of an escort, than of an army to defend the country. In this state it was to be apprehended that they would have sought safety in accompanying their allies to the fortresses at the extremity of Galicia; but, with a spirit which no suffering could extinguish, this half-starved, disorganized band still confided in their

30th Dec.

own exertions to keep the field, and, after the halt of one night, made a flank movement on Orense. The same morning the British rear-guard, abandoning the sick and a quantity of baggage, also fell back. The French were at this time close to the town in overpowering force; but the march of fifty miles to Villa Franca being performed, notwithstanding a deluge of cold chilling rain and occasional falls of snow, with the utmost constancy and celerity, the rear of the army, on the 3d of January, entered the defile without any loss by the sword. The close approach of several strong divisions of cavalry, supported by infantry, which, the same day, came up with the rear at Cacabelos, and skirmished with it to the entrance of the defile,\* gave full proof that however great the exertions which had been required of the soldiers, they were only sufficient to prevent the retreat of the army being endangered. It was found, however, even at this early period, that rapidity of movement, and the want of regular supplies, had completely shaken the discipline of the troops; stragglers had become numerous, and disgraceful scenes of drunkenness and plunder were frequent. Near Bembibre above five hundred stragglers, in a state of stupid intoxication,

CHAP.

V.

1808:

31st Dec.

1809.

British reach, without loss, the defiles of Galicia.

3d Jan.

The army much disorganized.

\* The French General of Brigade, Colbert, a very distinguished officer, fell in this affair.

CHAP. V. insensible to danger, and deaf to remonstrance, were of necessity abandoned. These were cut and slashed by the French cavalry as they passed, but careless of securing such senseless beings, they left them to perish on the ground; till at one moment the rear guard, under General Paget, having turned upon, and repulsed the cavalry, a number, in a most mutilated condition, were retaken. Such of them as were able to walk, were paraded through the ranks, mangled and bleeding, as a warning to their comrades; but with so little effect, that the town of Villa-franca was subsequently sacked, under the pretence of searching for food, and the cellars crowded with men in a state of deadly intemperance.

Exertions to  
restore  
order.

There can be little doubt that from this point of comparative safety, under a regular system of supply, such excesses might have been restrained, as Sir John Moore, by causing one of the plunderers to be executed on the spot, and by other strong measures of punishment and precaution, proved that he retained the power of enforcing his authority. It was, therefore, confidently expected that a stand would be made within the defile to re-establish discipline, or that the retreat would thenceforth be effected by such easy marches, as to prevent the disorganization increasing; the apprehension, however, of French corps turning the flanks, induced

the General to press the different divisions through the defile without the smallest halt or relaxation of speed, even making a night march with the rear-guard of ten miles to Herrerias. The main body of the cavalry being only an incumbrance in such a mountainous track, had been ordered to precede the infantry by forced marches to Lugo, and expresses were now sent directing the leading divisions to halt at the same place, and close up the army for mutual support. Those officers who ventured to judge for themselves could not credit the possibility of the French reaching in force any point in rear of the army, by a wide movement over cross-country communications, barely practicable for carriages, should the columns persevere in steadily falling back on the direct line of excellent road, and therefore sustained with reluctance what they considered unnecessary fatigue; whilst the majority, and the soldiers, who never reason beyond what they see, finding that, whilst traversing mountains covered with snow, nearly impracticable from their natural steepness, and affording the most favourable points for checking the pursuit, their marches were rather accelerated than slackened, lost all spirit. Urged to the utmost of their strength, without any regular supply of food, general despondency, leading to acts of plunder, was the consequence.—The little thus obtained proving

CHAP.

V.

1809.

Forced  
marches  
continued  
through the  
defile.

3d Jan.

Distressing  
conse-  
quences.

CHAP. V.  
1809. unequal to their wants, their indignation turned against the inhabitants, who, alarmed for their personal safety, and totally unable to meet the demands of successive applicants, barricadoed their doors, and fled to the mountains. Then, to obtain shelter, violence was, of necessity, permitted, and all remaining discipline vanished.

The weather much aggravated the sufferings and the losses of the troops; each mountain opposed three distinct climates to their exertions: at the base, dull heavy rain; on the ascent, cutting sleet or hail; and on the summit, thick snow with excessive cold. Many of the least robust, unable to bear up against such extremes, being overtaken by night in the latter situation, were frozen to death; the bullocks attached to the country cars were totally unable to resist such a degree of cold—hourly some sunk lifeless, and the sick and women they transported, were left to a similar fate. From some of these frozen summits, a view of the columns slowly winding along, could at intervals be caught for miles around; their track distinctly marked on the snow by the bodies of men and animals; a large proportion of the latter being horses belonging to the cavalry, which, crippled in passing over these deserted mountains, from want of nails to fasten their shoes, after long embarrassing the march by their slow movement, had been shot to prevent their being

rendered serviceable by the enemy. Detach- CHAP.  
ments of Spanish troops, not anticipating such V.  
an abandonment of their country, were fre- 1809.  
quently met escorting convoys of cannon, am-  
munition, clothing and stores to the front:  
these, reproached with being cowards and traitors,  
and ill-treated as such by the retiring army,  
quitted their charge: the drivers escaped with  
their cattle, and the carriages remained to en-  
cumber the road. All these circumstances added  
to the irregularity of the march, and disorder  
increased with a rapidity to threaten the speedy  
dissolution of the army. Repeated orders were  
issued, threatening all delinquents with the se-  
verest punishment: at the same time imputing  
the insubordination of the soldiers to the negli-  
gence of the officers, and forcibly appealing to  
their honour and feelings for greater exertion—  
but in vain, over-fatigue and extreme suffering  
having extinguished all care for the future.

The reserve, about 3,500 men, under Major-Ge-  
neral Paget, covering the rear, the movements of  
which the General in Chief constantly attended in  
person, formed the most collected body, and ac-  
complished the sixty-six miles between Villa-  
franca and Lugo, where it arrived on the evening  
of the 5th, in forty-eight hours. To make this  
exertion, a quantity of bullion, (about 35,000*l*.)  
and many valuable stores that could not advance  
at the same rate, were thrown down the preci-

**CHAP.** pices on either side of the road, or abandoned ;  
**V.** but even with these sacrifices, it was found im-  
 1809. practicable to retire further without some repose :  
 a general halt was therefore made on the 6th,  
 and after some skirmishing, in which the ad-  
 vanced posts sustained the attack with a steady-  
 ness and good order that excited surprise, the  
 troops were, as an endeavour to restore some  
 kind of organization, put in position in front  
 of the town, to offer battle to their pursuers.\*

Army offers  
 battle near  
 Lugo,

Never did any measure produce a more in-  
 stantaneous change in the appearance and beha-  
 viour of men : all became animated, all became  
 regular, and the army, posted with skill and  
 judgment, its right resting on the Tamboga, and  
 its front extending along the sides of a strong  
 ravine, presented such a formidable appearance,  
 that the enemy hesitated to commence the at-  
 tack, and halted in position on the opposite  
 ridge.

Buonaparte was no longer following with an  
 overwhelming force. On arriving at Astorga,  
 on the 1st January, finding that Sir J. Moore,

\* The dragoon entrusted with the despatch from Villa-  
 franca did not overtake Lieutenant General Frazer's division,  
 till the 5th, when it had reached Sabrado, two days' march on  
 the road to Vigo. This division had consequently four days  
 unnecessary marching, and the roads being in a most dreadful  
 state, both men and officers, on their return to Lugo, on the  
 7th, were quite exhausted.



by his well timed decision, had parried his manœuvres for intercepting the retreat of the British, he countermarched with half his army, and leaving Marshal Ney at Astorga, with 18,000 men, to keep Leon in subjection, confided the task of following the retiring force, to Marshal Soult, with 23,000 men only. That General, after a slight skirmish, in which the native valour of the soldiery shone forth with its accustomed brightness, did not venture to harass them by any further movement, and the two armies remained tranquil in their respective positions, till the evening of the 8th. The troops, during this time, were without any sort of shelter from the inclemency of the weather, and the scanty delivery of provisions, which had barely enabled them to exist, had almost exhausted the magazines: therefore, as a longer delay could lead to no good results, it having been decided to quit Galicia, they were silently withdrawn soon after 8th dark, leaving their fires burning; but the rain, which had fallen in torrents, had rendered the fields, which some of the brigades were obliged to traverse to gain the high road, so slippery, and darkness so impeded their progress, that the night was nearly consumed before the rear entered Lugo.

It having been ascertained during the halt, that Corunna was a more eligible place of embarkation than Vigo, and the distance being

CHAP.

V.

1809.

7th Jan.  
refused by  
the French.

The army  
retires on  
Corunna.

CHAP. three marches less, it obtained the preference;  
 V. and the army was directed on that town. The  
 1809. troops having in some degree recovered their discipline, and having impressed their pursuers with a salutary feeling of respect, their further retreat had become a simple military movement of little risk. Instead, however, of encouraging that opinion, amongst the soldiers, an appeal was made to their fears: in a general order issued at Lugo, after a just admonition that their safety depended upon their keeping with their battalions, and reminding them that the French cavalry had hitherto shown little mercy, even to the feeble and infirm who had fallen into their power, it was notified that "there are still forty-five miles to march, the soldiers must make an exertion to accomplish them; the rear guard cannot stop, and those who fall behind must take their fate." A scene of misery and distress followed, too painful to detail. The troops, already jaded, many of them barefoot and half famished, had to perform this long march over roads knee-deep in mud, and in face of torrents of rain driven by an impetuous wind. The columns, put in retreat with much order, quickly began to lengthen, and before half the distance was accomplished, became a string of men extending along leagues of road. The bridges could not be destroyed for want of implements, the whole of the Engineer's equipments having been burned by order, at Astorga, and no partial

Dated Lugo,  
9th Jan.

Hurried on.

Disastrous  
effect.

CHAP.  
V.  
1809.

checks for a moment impeded the enemy's passage of the rivers: the pursuit was as uninterrupted as the retreat; during which, only one short halt in the rain gave an opportunity for stragglers to come up, and all who did not then join, were passed by the rear-guard. At Betanzos, where, from the physical impossibility of urging farther forward any number of men in a body, the march was suspended at the conclusion of the second night, so little like the organization of an army could be discerned, that, to judge from appearances, its destruction had been accomplished. Ultimately, however, that proved by no means the case, for the French, deceived by the fires left for that purpose, did not commence the pursuit from Lugo, till ten hours after the army drew off, and could not come up with the rear in sufficient force to secure the numbers abandoned to them. Hundreds found opportunity to creep to the villages on either side of the road, from whence, by the friendly aid of the inhabitants, they were conveyed to Ferrol, or Portugal; and when most pressed, the stragglers, conscious of their strength, and become desperate, formed themselves into bodies, and checked their pursuers. Near the conclusion of the pursuit, the French cavalry, from scarcity of subsistence, being unable to follow with the same constancy that the British retired, halted more than once to refresh, which enabled

CHAP. V.   
 1809. considerable numbers that had been left to their fate, to regain their divisions; and on organizing the army after its arrival at Corunna, on the 11th,

Loss during  
the retreat.

it was found to muster nearly 15,000 combatants. The light division detached by Orense reached Vigo without loss, not having been followed by the enemy; so that the total number of men who sunk under the fatigue of the retreat, did not exceed 6 or 7,000. The guns and artillery carriages were all saved, by the goodness of their draft animals: the latter, however, had suffered greatly, and the cavalry were completely dismounted, nearly 5,000 horses of different descriptions having been destroyed: the stores and equipments of all kinds were lost, and to recompose the army and fit it for further hostilities, it became necessary that it should return to England.

Corunna.

Corunna, from its situation on the narrow neck of a promontory widely extending into the ocean, and defended by a strong citadel, presented a secure and favourable point for embarkation; and that operation would have been immediately effected, and the troops have quitted Spain, downcast as fugitives, without once having measured their strength with their pursuers, had transports been in attendance. Fortunately, however, the counter-arrangement dispatched from Lugo, ordering the vessels from Vigo to Corunna, had not been received in

time to admit of their working round to meet the army; and as adverse winds might still for a long period delay their arrival, orders were given to prepare against a siege, and working parties were employed to strengthen the defences of the short front, alone open to a land attack. The inhabitants, men, women and children, cheerfully aided in the task; nor did the precautionary measures of exploding a magazine containing half a million pounds of powder, and of spiking all their cannon towards the sea, which must have convinced them of the intention to abandon the place on the arrival of the ships, at all lessen their zeal or their fidelity: they continued their labours unabated, and the town, with such a garrison as might have been selected, was quickly in a state to defy, for an indefinite period, a force unprovided with heavy artillery.

CHAP.

V.

1809.

13th Jan.

The French were long in coming up, to which the passage of the river Mero materially contributed; as the Engineers, from its immediate vicinity to Corunna, had been able to obtain the necessary implements to accomplish the destruction of the bridge. It was the 14th before the enemy found means to repair it, and pass over their artillery, which gave time to the British Commander to re-organize the army, and place it in position on a range of heights covering the great road, about a mile and a half in advance

The army takes a position in advance of the town.

CHAP. of the town. The left was well appuyed on the  
 V. high banks of the river Mero, but the right had  
 1809. no natural advantages; it rested on the village  
 of Elvina, situated low down at the extremity  
 of the range of hills on which the front of the  
 army was formed. To counterbalance this defect  
 of the right of the ground, the division of  
 General Frazer was placed in echelon on a favourable  
 point, about half a mile in rear of the right;  
 and the reserve, under Major-General Paget,  
 was formed immediately in rear of the centre  
 of the line. The French divisions as they  
 successively arrived, took post on a more elevated  
 continuation of the same range of heights, their  
 position in many parts being indistinctly separated  
 from that of the British, and their piquets being  
 nearly in contact.

French attack,  
 16th Jan.

The two armies thus remained tranquilly regarding each other for two days, till at length the transports having arrived, the cavalry and all but one brigade of artillery were sent on board, and it was arranged for the troops to withdraw, and embark on the evening of the 16th: but on the morning of that day, reinforcements to the enemy joined, augmenting their numbers to 20,000. About 2 P.M., their line suddenly stood to their arms, and under cover of a fire of light troops and a heavy cannonade, quickly formed into four columns with a reserve, and began to descend the hill: one column against

the left, one against the centre, and two against the right of the British position : the two former slowly advanced, but the latter boldly precipitated themselves upon the village of Elvina, and endeavoured to envelope the right of the line. The troops stood firm, and maintained a cool and well directed fire, till on the near approach of the columns they were ordered to move forward to the charge, and the 50th Regiment was directed to recover the village. The line advanced with great spirit, but garden-walls and other enclosures prevented any general collision of the main bodies, and rendered the combat very partial. The brigade of Lord W. Bentinck (the 4th, 42d and 50th Regiments) on the extreme right, was the most closely engaged ; being outflanked by the advance of the enemy, the first mentioned battalion (being on the right) was judiciously thrown back en potence to the front, and poured such a close and destructive fire on the French column as to arrest its progress when nearly in contact with the flank. Majors Stanhope and Napier, commanding the 50th, rushed into Elvina in gallant style, and drove the defenders out with the bayonet, when, in the ardour of following up their success, the former fell, and the latter, being severely wounded, was made prisoner. The 42d Regiment also made a gallant and successful charge on a body in their front, and the Guards

CHAP.  
V.  
1809.

CHAP.

V.

1809.

being brought up to second their efforts, the French gave way at all points; but their artillery, advantageously posted on the heights commanding the village, and which had materially aided the attacks of the columns, now covered their retreat and checked the pursuit. From its fire, Lieutenant General Sir David Baird, at the head of his division, lost an arm, and shortly afterwards, Sir John Moore, whilst directing the movements of the 42d, and extolling their gallant conduct, was struck by a cannon ball and fell mortally wounded. These losses did not dispirit the troops, for although the enemy almost immediately poured down re-inforcements and renewed their efforts against the right, they were constantly repulsed with unshaken firmness. Sir John Hope, on whom the command of the army had devolved, witnessing the persevering exertions of the enemy, moved General Frazer's division nearer to the support of the corps most engaged, when the assailants, despairing of regaining the village by force, marched a heavy body along the valley to outflank the defenders: this manœuvre was parried by a judicious flank movement to the right by the reserve under Major General Paget, which not only repulsed the column endeavouring to turn the village, but enabled the right to drive the assailants far back. The French then directed their efforts against the centre and left successively: the



brigades of Major Generals Manningham and Leith, in line, firmly awaited the columns of attack, and after much firing, successfully advanced against them with the bayonet. The village of Oza, on the high road, was also for some time a point of severe contention; but the French after gaining possession, attempting to advance from it, were met by a gallant charge of the 14th Regiment, which drove them through the streets, and for some distance along the road. Thus repulsed at all points, and on many driven beyond their original position, they desisted: before dark all movements had ceased, and the different regiments had resumed their bivouacs.

CHAP.

V.

1809.

are repulsed  
at all points.

The result of the day, although of no immediate benefit to the army, neither delaying nor facilitating its re-embarkation, was in its general effect of incalculable value, as it proved to the enemy and to the world (at the small price of 800 killed and wounded) that, under the most adverse circumstances, the firmness of British infantry remains unshaken; for in this action, fought at the conclusion of a retreat of 200 miles, attended with unprecedented hardships, under every disadvantage of position, nearly unsupported by artillery, and without cavalry, they easily repulsed superior numbers of an elated enemy, well provided with both. All feeling of triumph, however, amongst the victors, was at the moment damped, and all mutual congra-

CHAP. tulation checked, by deep concern for the  
 V. loss of their chief, General Sir John Moore,  
 whose personal intrepidity always placing him  
 1809. foremost at the moment of danger, had com-

Death of Sir  
 J. Moore.

App. 7.

manded their respect, and whose manly character and humane disposition had won their esteem. He languished several hours after receiving his wound, expressing under most acute pain the elevated feelings of a soldier and a Christian.—His remains were deposited the same evening in one of the bastions of the citadel.

Here let us for a moment pause, and in justice to the memory of a gallant and accomplished soldier remark, that Sir John Moore's march on Sahagun, from which all his subsequent misfortunes arose, was stated by himself at the time to be a sacrifice of his own judgment to public opinion.—His first retrograde movement from Saldanha, on discovering the danger which menaced his communications, fully justified the high opinion previously entertained of his talents:—his decision, his firmness, and the manœuvres he executed on that occasion, extricated the army from a most perilous situation. His subsequent retreat from Villa-franca is now known to have been most unnecessarily precipitated; but lest we too harshly censure an error of judgment, it should be recollected that the halt of Buonaparte with the main body of his forces was at the time

unknown; that the retreat through Galicia being little expected, few arrangements had been made for the supply of the troops, and that with the great strength of the country, Sir John was personally unacquainted: further, that the British army was not then the veteran body we have since been accustomed to regard it, and that the star of Napoleon still shone in its greatest lustre.

CHAP.  
V.  
1809.

In the course of the night the troops were withdrawn into the town to embark, as had been arranged before the combat. To protect that operation, one brigade was posted as a rear-guard on the land fronts, and a second in reserve on the promontory in rear of the citadel: but piquets having been left at the most advanced points of the position, to maintain the fires of the different bivouacs, the French did not discover the retrograde movement, and the utmost regularity and quiet prevailed: the night proving very obscure, the several vessels could not be distinguished from each other, and the men were put on board as the boats chanced to come along-side, from which cause many of the ships received portions of twenty or thirty regiments or corps: otherwise, the best arrangement was preserved during the operation, and the seamen used such exertion that, at day-light, all the effective troops except the rear-guard were safely

Army embarks for England.

CHAP. V. embarked. Soon afterwards the French advanced to the cliffs overlooking the harbour, from whence they opened a fire on the transports from a few light guns, which had the effect of driving them to sea with such precipitation, that several ran on the rocks in front of the citadel, and either foundered or were burnt. Nevertheless, the good faith of the Spaniards enabling the rear-guard to continue the occupation of the town, even the sick and wounded were brought off without molestation; and in the evening of the 17th the whole had bid adieu to the shores of Spain, and were steering to England with a favourable gale.—Two days afterwards, when far distant, and the guns of the place could no longer be turned against their departing allies, the inhabitants of Corunna, left without means of resistance, made the best terms they could for themselves. The authorities of Ferrol, nearly similarly situated, on the town being invested by a French division followed their example, in despite of the more patriotic feelings of the populace, who could with difficulty be brought to submit. In these places the French obtained an immense supply of artillery, ammunition, and stores of every description, enabling them to overrun the remainder of Galicia.\*

1809.

17th Jan.

19th.

Corunna

and Ferrol  
surrender.

26th.

\* Memorandum of the number of men embarked for Spain

In the south, the torrent of disaster ran equally unchecked by the efforts opposed to it, and only ceased to overwhelm from having too widely spread. The fugitives from the Spanish armies on the Ebro, dispersed at the opening of the campaign, after traversing four hundred miles of country, individually or in small bodies, exposed to the most trying hardships, united to the number of 17,000 behind the Tagus. There, they were formed into an army by General Galluzo, who made dispositions to dispute the passage of the river, by posting corps to defend the different communications; but having failed in his endeavours to destroy the bridges, General Sebastiani, under a demonstration of passing at Arzobispo, crossed over 10 or 12,000 men at Almaraz on the 24th December, and attacked the Spanish divisions in detail. They were readily dispersed, and were pursued through Truxillo to Merida;

CHAP.  
V.  
1808.  
Operations  
in the south.

and Portugal in the year 1808, and of those that returned and remained.

|                    | Embarked. | Returned or<br>remaining<br>on Service. | Deficiency. |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------|-------------|
| Field Officers - - | 137       | 131                                     | 6           |
| Captains - - - -   | 404       | 390                                     | 14          |
| Subalterns - - -   | 1,158     | 1,109                                   | 49          |
| Staff - - - - -    | 273       | 259                                     | 14          |
| Serjeants - - -    | 2,234     | 2,133                                   | 101         |
| Drummers - - -     | 960       | 871                                     | 89          |
| Rank and File - -  | 40,616    | 34,147                                  | 6,469       |

Money lost during the campaign, £77,950.

CHAP. and the whole of the south of Spain, to the  
 V.  
 1809. very gates of Cadiz, would have been overrun  
 by the invaders, had not the supporting columns  
 been halted in their march, and turned to the  
 north in pursuit of the British.

Spaniards  
 defeated at  
 Ucles.

9th Jan.

10th.

Notwithstanding this lesson, some large bodies  
 of troops which had been trained in Granada  
 and Andalusia advanced immediately afterwards  
 from the mountainous tract of the Sierra-morena  
 into the plains of La Mancha, under the com-  
 mand of the Duke of Infantado, and being joined  
 by many of the dispersed soldiery, halted in posi-  
 tion on some favourable ground near Ucles, in  
 number about 25,000.—Marshal Victor marched  
 from Toledo to dislodge them, and after a slight  
 resistance on the morning of the 13th, put them  
 completely to the rout; the fugitives took the  
 road to Alcazar, where they unexpectedly found  
 that the French division of General Ruffin, with  
 a large body of cavalry and artillery, had pre-  
 ceded them; the consequences were most dis-  
 astrous; vast numbers of the Spaniards were  
 killed or maimed, some thousands surrendered  
 prisoners, and the remainder, throwing away  
 their arms or putting off their uniforms, sepa-  
 rated in various directions.

Operations  
 in Catalonia.

In Catalonia the French force, at the com-  
 mencement of the autumnal campaign, was in-  
 creased to 30,000 men, under the command of  
 General St. Cyr, who, as a first operation, laid

siege to Rosas early in November; but, from the obstinate resistance of the garrison, (to which a party of seamen under Lord Cochrane materially contributed,) did not obtain possession of it till the 6th December, when the defenders were driven behind their last intrenchment.—General St. Cyr then raised the blockade of Barcelona, and closed the year by defeating, on the Llobregat, the regular army of the province under General Reding.

CHAP.  
V.  
1808.

Buonaparte, soon after relinquishing the pursuit of the British, received intelligence that Austria had commenced hostile preparations in support of a protest she had previously issued against the treatment of the Spanish princes,—and believing that with the destruction of the regular armies all resistance would cease, he instantly returned to Paris to anticipate the impending storm, leaving instructions to his Marshals to finish the war by the occupation of Lisbon, Cadiz, and Valencia.\*

Considerations on the return of Buonaparte to France.

\* The following oration, which the writer thinks he has traced to be authentic, made by Buonaparte a little time previously to quitting Spain, shows the wrong impression he had imbibed of the nature of the contest.

After reading some pleasing dispatch, he exclaimed before a number of his generals:—"Every thing proceeds well.—La Romana cannot resist a fortnight longer.—The English are overthrown; they will never make another effort.—Three months hence the war will be at an end."

One of the Marshals having ventured to dissent from this

CHAP.

V.

1809.

The departure of their chief was highly detrimental to the French, as it depressed their confidence, and raised the hopes of their adversaries: it probably even much limited the extent of their triumphs; but the decisive effects attributed to it by many, of having saved the Peninsula, ought not to be lightly admitted. The only mode of subjugating an extensive country like Spain, the inhabitants of which, true to themselves, have maritime fortresses for the security and renewal of their dépôts, and no

opinion, and having stated that the people would never submit—Buonaparte thus resumed his speech.—“It is a La Vendée—I have tranquillized La Vendée.—The Calabrias were also in a state of insurrection—Wherever there are mountains there are insurgents. The kingdom of Naples is now quiet.—It is not enough to command an army well; one must have general views.—The continental system is not the same as in the time of Frederick; the great powers must absorb the smaller.—In this country the priests have considerable influence, and it is used to exasperate the people: but the Romans conquered them, the Moors conquered them, and they are not near so fine a people now as at that time. I will firmly settle the government. I will interest the nobility; and I will shower down grape shot (*et je ferai mitrailler le peuple*) on the people.—Had Cæsar permitted himself to be disheartened he would never have conquered Gaul. What do they want? The Prince of Asturias? Half the nation object to him—besides, he is dead to them. They have no longer any dynasty to oppose to me: they say the population is against us: why Spain is a perfect solitude; there are not five men per square league: besides, if it be a question of numbers, I will pour all Europe into their country—they have to learn what a first-rate power can effect.”



government to compromise their spirit by negotiation, is by the occupation of every district. The invaders, however numerous, can bear but a small proportion to the total population, and, however irresistible at the commencement, must daily become weaker by the extension attendant on their successes, till they ultimately become on most points inferior to those they are endeavouring to subdue. The necessity of a systematic and progressive advance, seems so inherent in such an operation, that it may be doubted whether the military talents of Napoleon Buonaparte, wielding the powerful resources of France, could have dispensed with it, and whether he did not gain more in personal reputation, by his opportune disappearance from the scene at the moment of the extension of his forces, than he suffered in his political interests by any consequent protraction of the contest. If, under any view, the affairs of the Peninsula might have been considered desperate at this period, it was from an impression, amongst the chiefs opposed to him, that resistance to his fortune was vain. Nothing can more strongly mark the baneful effects of such feelings than the events in Galicia; Corunna and Ferrol, the only fortresses that, during the war, surrendered without a regular attack, being those best covered by armies in the field, and best situated for being abundantly provided and well garrisoned. They were moreover those

CHAP.  
V.  
1809.

CHAP. which England had it most in her power to suc-  
 V. cour; and the latter contained objects of pecu-  
 1809. liar British interest, a naval arsenal and a power-  
 ful squadron; yet those places fell to an army  
 of 20,000 men, that could not command a bat-  
 tering gun or siege store within 400 miles, with-  
 out an effort being made to preserve them.

Firmness of  
 the Spanish  
 and British  
 govern-  
 ments.

Happily, neither the British nor Spanish gov-  
 ernments participated in these feelings of  
 despondency. On the 14th January, at the  
 very moment when all hope of success seemed  
 to have vanished, the former, in a solemn treaty,  
 pledged itself never to acknowledge any other  
 king of Spain than Ferdinand, his heirs, or law-  
 ful successors; and the latter, in return, bound  
 itself by the same act, never to cede to France  
 any portion of the territories or possessions of  
 Spain. In these generous and noble resolutions  
 each party was supported by nearly the total of  
 the two nations. In England, a feeling of ho-  
 nour, of sympathy, and of admiration, super-  
 seded all considerations of prudence; whilst  
 in Spain the peculiar qualities of the people came  
 to their aid: neither the constancy nor the con-  
 fidence of the Spaniards was shaken by their  
 reverses; though nearly all their chiefs had  
 proved themselves incapable, and though no  
 one event to inspire hope had glimmered through  
 the late train of disasters, their pride and their  
 presumption remained unabated.

Joseph Buonaparte returned to Madrid at the end of January, and, under protection of French bayonets, was immediately inaugurated as King of Spain. Some of those Spaniards of rank who had at first conscientiously aided the change of government, from a persuasion that it would prove a benefit to their country, now, from necessity, gave Joseph the sanction of their names, and were continued in the chief offices of the state: a few also were found to replace those who had joined the ranks of their countrymen; but the determination of every other individual throughout Spain, to resist the establishment of the new dynasty, was, if possible, more firmly rooted than previously to the dispersion of the armies. This spirit was manifested in so eminent a degree in the defence of Zaragossa, as to claim a very particular detail.

To appreciate justly the merits of the defenders, Zaragossa should be considered almost in the light of an unfortified town; for although immediately after the repulse of the French in the preceding summer, a continued line of exterior defensive works had been planned, it having been thrown up in haste, and executed with greater zeal than judgment, gave more the appearance than the reality of additional strength to the place. General Palafox again commanded the garrison, which, besides the citizens, consisted of 20,000 of the fugitives from Tudela, and

CHAP.

V.

1809.

Return of  
Joseph to  
Madrid.  
22d Jan.Second  
siege of  
Zaragossa.

CHAP. of 15,000 armed peasants ; nearly 150 pieces of  
 V. artillery were mounted on the different works,  
 1808. and the place contained a tolerable supply of  
 ammunition : provisions and stores abounded, as  
 every thing likely to be useful to the enemy had  
 been brought into the town from the neighbour-  
 ing villages ; all the gardens and enclosures for  
 half a mile round the walls, had been destroyed,  
 and most of the hollow ways had been filled in.

27th Nov. Marshal Moncey's corps d'armée, detached by  
 Buonaparte on his advance to Madrid to blockade  
 the place, remained at Alagon, collecting mate-  
 rials and bringing up stores and heavy artillery  
 from Pamplona, till the 19th of December, when  
 it was joined by the corps d'armée of Marshal  
 Mortier from France, making together a force of  
 35,000 infantry ; six companies of artillery and  
 eleven companies of sappers and miners had been  
 previously assembled at the same place for the du-  
 ties of the siege, and a corps of cavalry at Fuentes  
 20th Dec. to watch the movements of the Aragonese. The  
 day after the junction, the army moved forward  
 to invest the city on both banks of the Ebro. On  
 the right, the outpost of the Torrero, about a mile  
 in advance of the town, was assaulted and carried  
 with little loss ; the garrison, after a slight resist-  
 ance, having withdrawn on the nearest piquets.  
 On the left of the river a spirited attempt to lodge  
 in the suburbs was unsuccessful : the assailants  
 rapidly advanced in considerable force, driving in

or bayoneting all the Spanish posts; but afterwards confining their attack to one street only, they were firmly opposed, and after some hours contention, attended with the loss of 400 of their number, finding success hopeless, they withdrew, and were pursued for some distance. The escape of the garrison of the Torrero was politically represented as equivalent to a victory, and the repulse of the enemy from the suburb, in which most of the citizens shared, was made a subject of public rejoicing and religious thanksgiving; so that these first events tended in a high degree to revive former confidence and confirm the belief of invincibility under Palafox, favoured by our Lady del Pilar, the protectress of the city.

CHAP.  
V.  
1808.

The French, on the contrary, were divided into two corps—one as the covering, the other as the attacking force, under the independent command of two Marshals, mutually jealous of each other's interference. Nine days elapsed subsequently to the close investment, without any hostile operation; during which period, the inhabitants seeing that affairs had become serious, dedicated themselves with zeal to the formation of those interior defences, which respect for private property had caused to be deferred, whilst any hope of escaping a siege could be entertained. The doors and windows of the houses were blocked up, the walls were pierced with openings to fire through, and safe communications made with

CHAP. the rear of each : ditches were sunk across the  
 V. streets—every outlet was palisaded and traversed

1808. for defence ; and batteries, armed with artillery, were constructed to enfilade the principal approaches.—Thus prepared, the Zaragossans waited with confidence the further operations of the besiegers.

On the 29th December, the trenches were regularly opened against the Chateau of the Inquisition on the left, the bridge of the Huerba in the centre, and the Convent of St. Joseph on the right, situated in advance of the new enceinte, and converted into military posts by the addition of field retrenchments ; the latter being made the principal point of attack, on account of the works of the town in its rear being without a rampart. As the communication from the city to the convent could not be interrupted, the garrison, daily relieved, made repeated sallies, and such a vigilant resistance, that it was not till the evening of the

1809. 11th January, when the walls had been nearly levelled by the powerful fire of thirty pieces of artillery, that a lodgment could be effected. Four days afterwards, the tête-de-pont being in

15th Jan. a similar manner carried, a second parallel was opened against the works of the town, and batteries commenced in it to enfilade and destroy the defences of the convents of the great Augustins, the Capucins, and Santa Engracia, the principal supports of the line : the garrison made

many bold sorties to interrupt its progress, and maintained such an incessant fire, that above a week was consumed in its completion. 1809.

CHAP.

V.

About this time Marshal Lasnes assumed the supreme command, and gave unity of action to the besiegers. Soon after his arrival fifty-five pieces of heavy ordnance battered in breach the newly-raised works of the enceinte, and in a few hours formed three considerable breaches: the French vigorously assaulted them the following morning, and after a short resistance gained the summit; when immediately rushing on, they made themselves masters of the convents of Santa Engracia, the Capucins, and Calzas, which had been much damaged by the previous cannonade, and also of the fortified entry of several streets in their vicinity. 26th Jan. 27th.

The complete success of this bold assault having rendered the besiegers masters of every defensive obstacle in the shape of a fortification, an ordinary garrison would have considered further resistance hopeless, and either have surrendered at discretion, or have attempted to escape through the posts of the investing corps on the left of the river. Not so, however, with the Zaragossans: after a short interval the tocsin having sounded, the citizens pressed to the spot from all quarters, and animated by the remembrance of their former success, renewed the combat with such fury, that after a long and desperate

CHAP.

V.

1809.

struggle, the French were driven into the convents or to the summit of the breaches, where reinforcements from the trenches with difficulty enabled them to maintain themselves whilst they formed secure lodgments. The garrison during that operation kept up an incessant fire from the surrounding buildings, and every moment sallied forth and fought hand to hand with the troops and workmen: in these fierce encounters, women and priests were observed amongst the foremost and most courageous; 600 of the French were, in the course of the day, put hors de combat, and openly to contend with such enthusiasm, was deemed hopeless. The besiegers, in consequence, preserved the utmost regularity in their subsequent proceedings, raising powerful batteries against the Convents of the Great Augustins, Santa Monaca, and other considerable buildings, situated within the enceinte, and only attempting to advance by the sap and the mine. They relinquished altogether the left attack against the Chateau of the Inquisition, and even restricted their operations on the right to the space between the street named Quemada and the river, and at the centre attack to the houses immediately round the Nunnery of the Sisters of Jerusalem, and the Convent of St. Francis, and retrenched with care every considerable building as soon as in their power.

28th Jan.

The contest in the streets was maintained by



the garrison with far greater obstinacy than the defence of the fortifications : each house became a citadel, and required to be separately attacked. The defenders made the most surprising efforts : when forced out of one room, they renewed the combat in the next ; and, when driven, inch by inch, out of a building, they frequently by a desperate offensive effort, recovered it, and the besiegers had the same resistance a second time to overcome. Palafox even directed counter approaches against the buildings retrenched by the French, and having breached the Convent of the Capucins, he caused it to be assaulted on the evening of the 31st January. Religion and superstition were his powerful auxiliaries. Monks, with crucifixes in their hands and sabres at their side, headed the storming party, and failing at the breach, endeavoured to break open the doors, till the bodies of the fallen soldiers rendered the attempt hopeless. Indeed the priesthood were unremitting in their endeavours to stimulate the exertions of the citizens and troops, and mainly contributed by their example and influence to the obstinacy of the defence. The whole confraternity preached, absolved, or fought, as the occasion demanded ; and besides assuring eternal bliss to those who might fall, obtained credit for the most monstrous tales of the appearance of visions, in token of immediate relief and the favour of heaven. Under such a system of re-

CHAP.

V.

1809.

29th Jan.

30th.

CHAP. V. religious delusion, enthusiasm amongst the people attained its highest pitch—then death under every form was despised—regardless of showers of missiles, the raging of fire, and the explosion of mines, individuals sought personal conflict with eagerness: persons of all ages and conditions took part in the combat: the females, overcoming the natural timidity and delicacy of their sex, shared the fatigue and danger of the defence equally with the men, and some of high birth and elegant manners were distinguished for the zeal and boldness with which they selected the post of greatest peril; it is even recorded that the very feelings of their nature were so worked upon by the scene around them, that the fall of husband, child, or parent, seldom called forth other expressions at the moment than those of more deadly hatred and more determined resistance to the foe. All this enthusiasm, however, failed against the skill of their more experienced antagonists: the mine incessantly paralysed the exertions of the garrison; the convent of the Nuns of Jerusalem, with the stupendous hospital in its rear, the college of Pius, the convent of St. Francisco, and various other buildings, successively blown up, became the untimely graves of their valiant defenders. At the attack of the latter more particularly, mine sprung after mine with well-timed precision, caused the destruction of those brought forward to dispute the

6th Feb.

7th.

breach created by the former, and at one explosion a whole battalion, enticed over the fatal spot by demonstrations of an assault, perished in a body. Every attempt to contend with the besiegers in this subterraneous warfare proved fatal to the Zaragossan miners, who being unpractised in the chicanery of the art, were constantly suffocated by their opponents, or the sides of their galleries being unexpectedly blown in, they were sabred, and their labour turned against their friends. Fierce conflagrations judiciously raised amongst the buildings by the French, greatly aided this destructive warfare; and daily, hourly, they made some progress, till at the right attack, having blown down sixty houses in one line, and burned nearly as many, they penetrated to the principal street, named the Cosso, which encircles the inner town: there the buildings are very large and solid, and from their construction with arched floors nearly incombustible: experience had taught the Spaniards how to perfect their interior defences, and the contest revived with additional vigour. It seemed as if no danger could appal nor misfortune depress the courage of the garrison: three days were the French sappers successfully opposed in their endeavours to effect a passage across the street, and after batteries had breached the Convents of the Trinity and University, situated within the Cosso,

CHAP.  
V.  
1809.

12th Feb.

19th Feb.

CHAP. V. 1809. their interiors became the scene of a fierce and protracted struggle. During this time, some vigorous exertions made by the Aragonese to throw in supplies, had occasioned such large detachments to be sent from the besieging army, that the numbers for the attack were reduced to 10,000, which admitted of only one relief in the trenches; this severe duty being performed with a very irregular and scanty supply of food, and the unvarying obstinacy of the defence giving no prospect of its speedy termination, the French troops had for some time wavered in their hopes and resolution, and much murmuring and complaining were heard. Marshal Lasnès, however, had the firmness to make them persevere in their efforts, till an epidemic, generated by the numbers of the unburied slain, broke out in the city, causing far more havoc than the sword, and reducing the garrison to the utmost extremity of wretchedness and misery. On the 17th of February, 14,000 individuals lay suffering under wounds or sickness, without bandages or medicines, and almost without food or cover. Their distressing condition affected the minds of those in health, as the boldest could not contemplate without dismay the probability of soon participating in so hapless a fate. The intrepid Palafox, and other chiefs, apparently unmoved in the midst of the general desolation, unceasingly endeavour-

ed, by their personal example and promises of immediate relief, to renovate the exertions of the defenders, but such attempts had been too frequently repeated to produce any great effect; even the interposition of the miraculous powers of the Lady del Pilar in favour of her devoted city, hitherto so steadfastly and so religiously expected, began to be doubted, and in every quarter the efforts of resistance gradually declined. On the 18th, the unlooked for explosion of two mines, containing 3000lbs. of powder each, nearly destroyed the University, blowing up most of the defenders, when the French, instantly rushing in and bayonetting the remainder, penetrated to the very heart of the city, and scarcely a considerable building remained, as a citadel, in possession of the garrison.

CHAP.  
V.  
1809.

Hitherto, the suburb on the left of the Ebro had been undisturbed since the failure of the storming columns on the night of the investment, affording space and comparative security for such of the garrison as were not actually engaged. The besiegers, now that they had secure possession of all the principal buildings in the town, felt emboldened to act vigorously on that side also. On the 18th February, fifty heavy guns opened against the Convent of Jesus, which, as soon as breached, was assaulted; the Spaniards made a desperate resistance, but

CHAP. being overwhelmed, all but 300 perished, which  
V. number in a body, by an effort of determined  
1809. courage, gained the bridge and entered the  
town. The French immediately advancing to  
the river, nearly 3000 men posted in a distant  
quarter, finding their communication with the  
city cut off, and being enfeebled with disease  
and hunger, surrendered prisoners, and the  
besiegers obtained possession of the whole  
suburb. This was a decisive blow, as it com-  
pressed all the garrison into a very restricted  
space, and admitted of many of their defences  
being taken in reverse. No shot had for some  
time past remained but those collected after  
having been fired by the enemy, and no ammu-  
nition beyond the daily supply of a manufactory  
established in the town since the investment:  
the site of that now became endangered, as six  
mines charged with 18,000lbs. of powder were  
nearly ready to be exploded under the limited  
space remaining to the besieged, and 100 pieces  
of ordnance incessantly showered over every  
portion of it. In this extremity the heroic Pala-  
fox sickened, and affairs became desperate. The  
same evening he transferred his authority to a  
junta, of which Don Pedro Ric was named presi-  
dent: this intrepid Spaniard set all the powers of  
religion and art at work to rouse the people, and  
on the 20th made an offensive effort to seize some  
of the French guns; the number of the garrison

found capable of exertion did not exceed 4000; and, after a desperate struggle, they were repulsed with great loss. As after this unsuccessful trial of strength, nothing but destruction could attend a further resistance, the junta deputed their president to negotiate a capitulation, and a cessation of fire took place. Marshal Lasnes demanded an unconditional surrender: this was resisted by Don Ric, who threatened to return; and, however hopeless, renew the struggle: the French did not choose to render such antagonists desperate, and Ric, by firmness of conduct, after 30,000 citizens had buried themselves under the ruins of their houses, forced Marshal Lasnes to promise good treatment to the survivors, and a choice of residence to their adored chief Palafox.

“ The garrison, 15,000 in number, marched out, and laid down their arms, after a resistance of fifty-two days open trenches, twenty-three of which were a war of houses. The town, on entering it, presented a dreadful and melancholy spectacle; entire districts of it were demolished by repeated explosions, and presented merely a mass of ruins thickly spread over with mutilated limbs and carcasses; the few houses which fire and the mine had spared, were riddled by shot and shells; their interiors were cut through with communications, the walls loop-holed, the doors and windows barricadoed, and the streets blocked up with numberless traverses. The dirt,

CHAP.  
V.  
1809.

CHAP. corruption and misery, attending the crowding  
V. together of more than 100,000 souls into a city  
1809. calculated for only 40,000, with all the hardships attendant on a long siege, had generated a frightful epidemic, more relentless than the sword. In the midst of the ruins and bodies with which the streets were filled, were observed here and there crawling along, a few inhabitants, pale, emaciated and cast down, who seemed on the point of following their dead comrades, whom they had been unable to remove. From an enumeration made at the commencement and at the termination of this extraordinary and terrible siege, it has been ascertained that in fifty-two days fifty-four thousand individuals perished; being two-thirds of the military and half of the inhabitants or refugees. The loss of the besiegers did not exceed 3,000.\*

During the siege, the efforts of the Aragonese to throw in supplies were unceasing, and they broke their strength and exhausted their resources in repeated attempts to penetrate through the quarters of the formidable army that invested the place. In these operations, being frequently outmanœuvred and their retreat intercepted, their loss was excessive; and on the fall of the place, they became so discour-

\* *Rélation du Siège de Saragosse, par Monsieur le Baron de Rogiat, Lieutenant-Général.*



raged, that Aragon had the appearance of being  
 perfectly tranquil. Fourteen thousand men only  
 were left in the province under General Suchet;  
 and the remainder of the besieging army, under  
 Marshal Mortier, moved into Castile.

CHAB.

V.

1809.

The defence of Zaragossa, being almost the  
 only creditable event of the campaign, was  
 most highly vaunted. The Supreme Junta de-  
 creed personal nobility to all the defenders and  
 their heirs for ever. Poets and orators were sti-  
 mulated, by offers of high reward, to celebrate  
 their praise, and medals were ordered to be  
 struck, and monuments to be erected in every  
 town as remembrancers of their deeds. Through-  
 out Europe the defence was regarded with ad-  
 miration, and obtained a celebrity perhaps even  
 beyond its real merits, when it is considered  
 how inferior the assailants were in numbers to  
 the defenders, and how comparatively insignifi-  
 cant their loss: but granting the palm of skill  
 and science to the besiegers, as seems their due,  
 it cannot be doubted that whilst heroic self-de-  
 votion, unshaken loyalty, and exalted patriotism  
 are held in estimation amongst mankind, the  
 name of Palafox, blended with that of Zaragossa,  
 will be immortalized.

The loss of such an able chief as General  
 Palafox, who was sent prisoner into France,  
 was a severe misfortune to Spain, as no other  
 officer commanded a similar degree of confi-

CHAP.

V.

1809.

dence. The Marquis de la Romana had displayed the most ability: it has been shewn that, succeeding to the chief command in the north, at the moment of the greatest disaster, he contrived to unite and preserve the wreck of Blake's forces, and that, on the advance of the French into Galicia, finding himself with a most unmanageable force in the fore ground at Leon, with the mountains of Asturias in his rear, the passages over which were nearly if not entirely blocked up with snow, he generously relinquished the safe road of Corunna to the British, and hazarded the bold measure of a lateral movement on Orense. The Marquis being successful in this manœuvre, preserved one army in the field, which, a half-starved disorganized band, with some fugitive corps in La Mancha and Estremadura, now formed the only remaining military force of Spain; whilst the number of the enemy spread over the country fell little short of 200,000 men.

Depressed  
state of the  
Spanish mi-  
litary force.

Opinions  
and feelings  
in England.

This state of affairs shook the hopes of the most zealous advocates of the cause in England; and warm debates were maintained in both houses of parliament, on the conduct of the past campaign and on the propriety of risking another army in Spain. The ministry were favourable to the latter measure, but it became impracticable, from a feeling of distrust and national jealousy in the Spaniards, not altogether un-

reasonable at the moment of finding their fortresses and their fleets in Galicia abandoned without a struggle. On the first intelligence of Sir J. Moore's retreat, the corps embarked under Major General Sherbrooke was directed to proceed to Cadiz, to secure that important place for the assembly of a British force, to sustain the efforts of the Spaniards in the south; but the Supreme Junta, after some negotiation, positively refused the troops permission to enter the fortress, ingenuously stating, that such a concession would deprive them of all public confidence, "the first and principal spring of their power:" the fleet, in consequence, steered back to the Tagus, and Portugal became the theatre of the British operations.

CHAP.  
V.  
1809.

Seville,  
1st March,  
1809.



## CHAPTER VI.

*Occurrences in Portugal—Portuguese Military—Marshal Soult captures Vigo and Tuy—crosses the Minho—defeats the Marquis de la Romana—takes Chaves—disperses the Portuguese Forces—captures Oporto—Spaniards defeated at Medellin and Ciudad Real—Sir Arthur Wellesley arrives to command in Portugal—forces the Passage of the Douro—recovers Oporto—drives Soult into Galicia—returns to oppose Marshal Victor on the Tagus—Efforts of the Spaniards—Recapture of Vigo—Repulse of the French at the Passage of the Soto Mayor—Evacuation of Galicia by Marshal Ney—Movements in Aragon and Catalonia—Exertions of the Supreme Junta—Guerrillas.*

CHAP.

VI.

1809.

Occur-  
rences in  
Portugal.

A FULL account of the disasters in the north of Spain did not reach Lisbon till the succeeding month, when it was coupled with the alarming intelligence that three French armies were assembling for the subjugation of Portugal. One, of 27,000 men under Marshal Soult in Galicia; a second of 5000 under General Lapisse at Salamanca; and the third of 12,000 on the banks of the Tagus, under Marshal Victor; in which near and vulnerable quarter, the only force in the field was a collection of fugitives from General Galluzo's and the Duke of Infantado's armies, which General Cuesta was attempting to reorganize.\* The British forces

\* The concluding bulletin of the operations attendant on Buonaparte's entry into Spain, (the 33d) announced that "the

only amounted to six or seven thousand, and the native army was in its infancy. Consternation and dismay followed: the garrison and stores were withdrawn from Almeida; the forts and batteries on the Tagus were dismantled; and the British troops concentrated for instant embarkation. Happily, however, the return of Buonaparte to France with 15,000 of his troops, and the movement of Sir John Moore on Galicia checked the impetus given to the French arms, and allowed an interval for preparation, which was duly improved.

CHAP.  
VI.  
1809.

Portugal, being precluded by its geographical situation from all collision with the powers beyond the Pyrenees, and having from its small size always stood on the defensive or borne a secondary part in its wars with Spain, enjoyed at this time scarcely any military consideration; and the two belligerents regarded with almost equal contempt the aid or hostility of her regular

Military  
character  
of the  
Portuguese.

Duke of Dalmatia arrived at Tuy on the 10th February: that he was preparing every thing to cross the Minho on the following day: that he ought to arrive at Oporto between the 15th and 20th February, and at Lisbon between the 20th and 28th. The English are embarking at Lisbon to abandon Portugal: the indignation of the Portuguese is at its height: daily there are great and bloody quarrels between the Portuguese and English. In Galicia the Duke of Elchingen is completing the organization of the province. The Duke of Belluno marches on Badajos: he is disarming and pacifying all Lower Estremadura. Zaragossa has surrendered."

CHAP. VI. army. Indeed it was lightly imagined by both parties that the inhabitants were so sunk in luxury and sloth as to be incapable of forming good troops. The fact, however, is, that the Portugueze are a people peculiarly adapted for military exertion, the lower classes being universally hardy, patient and docile, whilst those of education, holding in remembrance the heroic deeds of their ancestors, cherish strong feelings of military pride.

1809.

As proof of this, Count Lippe Schaulemberg, in the war of 1762, by encouragement and good arrangement, raised the military profession in a few months from the lowest state of nullity and abasement to efficiency and respect. In this condition it remained till the period when the Marquis of Pombal gained an uncontrolled sway, whose arbitrary disposition leading him to model every department of the state into mere engines of his will, he drove the nobility and men of property from the military service by contumelious treatment, and filling the several ranks with foreign officers or worthless dependants, sank the profession into its former abasement. It had however again, by a little encouragement, risen into utility and respect, when the French altogether annihilated it in 1808.

The government of Portugal, conscious of its limited resources, and having a firm reliance on

the friendship and power of England, has always, in the hour of danger, trusted to her for support; and at this crisis, actuated by such feeling, it submitted entirely to her guidance: General Beresford, selected by the British ministry, was in February appointed Marshal and Commander-in-chief of the Lusitanian forces; and being invested with unlimited authority, and supported by British officers nominated to the superior commissions of each battalion, undertook the laborious task of introducing a general system of discipline and subordination, and forming the new levies into an army. These now amounted to 10,000 men regimented, and about half that number of recruits assembled in various dépôts.

CHAP.  
VI.  
1809.

Marshal  
Beresford  
Commander  
in Chief.

The gallant behaviour of a native legion, previously organized at Oporto by Sir Robert Wilson, afforded the most encouraging expectations from this measure. At the period of the greatest panic, that officer, acting in conjunction with the Spaniards beyond the Agueda, with a very small corps of natives and some stragglers from Sir John Moore's army, by a judicious and spirited conduct, kept open the communication with Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, and held in check the enemy's force on that frontier. At the same time the Spaniards, by an unlooked-for effort, obliged the French to recross the Tagus at Almaraz and destroyed the bridge, which

Lusitanian  
legion.

CHAP. VI.  
 1809.

materially added to the security of the south, as the roads leading from the other passages over the river are not considered practicable for artillery in winter. The Junta, from the seat of government at Seville, issued the most manly and encouraging proclamations, which drew forth the most liberal donations and the most spirited exertions from the southern provinces; and soon again a respectable army appeared in the field under General Cuesta, a division of which, commanded by the Duke of Albuquerque, gained, in the middle of February, considerable advantages over Victor's force at Consuegra and Mora, on the borders of La Mancha, and, for the moment, checked its career. These successes of the native troops gave great animation to all; 20,000 of the Portuguese were taken into the pay of England; and the British force at Lisbon being augmented to 17,000 men,\* before a blow was struck, confidence had gradually returned.

Invasion  
 of Tras os  
 Montes.

The storm first approached from the north. Early in February Marshal Ney's corps moved into Galicia; and Marshal Soult, with 24,000 infantry and 3000 cavalry, marched on Oporto by Vigo and Tuy, where he left garrisons. At

\* Major General Sherbrooke arrived at Lisbon on the 12th March with 5000 men, and Major General Hill on the 4th April with 6000 men.



the latter place he attempted to ferry his army over the Minho, but the first boat that pushed off being sunk by a fire from the citadel of Valença, and the commandant refusing to enter into any negociation, he relinquished the undertaking and ascended the river forty miles to Orense. At the commencement of his march, the peasantry in the different districts assembled in bodies of some thousands and attempted to defend their villages; but the cavalry, which preceded the main body by a mountain road skirting the river through Maurentan and Ribadavia, having burned those and other places and sabred many hundreds of the inhabitants, spread such terror that no opposition was attempted on the high road, and the artillery reached Orense without loss. This unexpected movement had nearly proved fatal to the Marquis de la Romana, who, driven by the extreme superiority of the enemy to the confines of the kingdom, and amongst a people with whom he had established little communication, was surprised near Monterey, and pursued with loss to Sanabria.

CHAP.  
VI.  
1809.

17th Feb.

18th.

27th

6th March

Soult entered Portugal by the road of Chaves, meeting with little opposition, as General Bernardino Friere de Andrade, to whom the defence of the country was confided, had arranged to retire with his ill-disciplined force to the mountains near Oporto, from whence he might effectually harass the enemy during the attack of

10th

CHAP. VI. the city; or, should they fail of success, would probably annihilate them during their retreat.

1809. These prudent measures were first interrupted by a mutiny of the division under General Silveira; some battalions of which insisted on defending Chaves, and remaining in the town, were shut up and obliged to surrender at discretion on the third day. Soult left a garrison

13th Mar. in the place to maintain his communication with Galicia, and proceeded onward. The

15th. young troops under General Friere, even after so recent an example of the ill consequences of disobedience, impatiently demanded to give battle, which with difficulty he opposed, and led them to Braga: there thousands of armed peasants flocked to his standard and added to the clamour for immediate combat. Friere had still the firmness to resist, and was in the act of representing to some of the most enlightened the advantages of protracting the contest, when the senseless multitude, unable to distinguish between prudence and treachery, suspected the

General  
Friere as-  
sassinated.

18th.

latter in this advice, and rushing into the apartment, sacrificed him and the officers of his staff; and then, alarmed at their own violence, tumultuously evacuated the town. In a short time, however, their insubordination and presumption returned in full force, and they insisted on a British officer, Baron Eben, assuming the command and leading them against the enemy.

Their new commander gratified their wishes, and on the following day committed them in battle in a strong position on the high road near Carvalho da Este, about five miles in front of Braga, where, after some creditable efforts of individual bravery, they were totally dispersed, and some hundreds falling under the sabres of the enemy's cavalry, made just atonement to the manes of their murdered chief. The French the same day entered Braga unopposed, where head quarters remained till the 23d, small parties in the meanwhile scouring the country for several miles around, without seeing anything of the defeated army.

CHAP.  
VI.  
1809.

19th Mar.

The efforts of the peasantry were far more annoying to the invaders than those of the embodied troops: having a perfect knowledge of the intricacies of their country, one of the most precipitous and rocky in Europe, they incessantly impeded or closely harassed the columns of march, remaining to dispute every pass and to fire from every inaccessible precipice. The inhabitants of these northern provinces, naturally brave and enterprising, and rendered desperate by the certainty of death attending unsuccessful hostility, gave on this occasion an example of the utmost efforts of a people to defend their homes: individuals frequently fought with a desperate resolution, and instances occurred of heroic

Efforts of  
the pea-  
santry.

CHAP. self-devotion which startled belief: they were;  
 VI. however, invariably defeated with little loss to  
 1809. the invaders whenever they attempted resistance  
 in a considerable body; and it strongly marks the  
 superiority which organization and discipline  
 give to men, that the French traversed the

27th Mar. whole country and invested Oporto with a loss  
 little exceeding 1000 killed and wounded.

Attack of  
 Oporto.

That city had been recently covered by an extensive line of detached works, extending from the Douro on the right to the ocean on the left, on which were mounted 200 pieces of artillery, and 20,000 troops were collected for its defence. These preparations were, however, rendered of no avail by similar insubordination and mistrust to that which had ruined their army in the field. The first day of the investment, several of the superior officers, on attempting to enforce obedience to their commands, were taxed with treason by the soldiery and murdered on the spot; after which no effort was made to regulate the defence: every one, to prove his loyalty and courage, crowded to the front, from whence an useless heavy firing was maintained for two days, whilst Marshal Soult was collecting his army and making arrangements for a general assault. Those completed, the French infantry, on the morning of the 29th of March, under a heavy fire of musquetry and various demonstrations on the flanks, advanced against the centre,

successively carried with the bayonet the various redoubts with which it was studded, and formed a road into the town, through which the cavalry instantly galloped, and charging along the streets, made an indiscriminate slaughter of those whom they overtook;—a blind panic seized upon the garrison equally with the inhabitants, and all thoughts of resistance being relinquished, they precipitated themselves on the bridge over the Douro in such masses, that a portion of it sunk under their weight. Even after this accident had precluded the possibility of flight, prodigious multitudes continued to attempt the passage, and crowded on the part of the bridge remaining, where, placed between the fire of the contending parties, many hundreds rendered desperate leaped into the river, whilst others, fixed in a state of stupid immovability, were swept away by repeated discharges of grape shot.

CHAP.  
VI.  
1809.

In the city, plunder and licentiousness prevailed throughout the day to a terrible extent, the bad passions of the soldiery being heightened by a desire to avenge on the citizens the hostility of the peasantry; it is, however, pleasing to add, that Marshal Soult strenuously exerted himself to restore order, and saved much that would otherwise have been destroyed.

The day previous to the fall of Oporto, which laid open the northern provinces of Portugal, the Spanish army under General Cuesta sus-

Battle of  
Medellin.

CHAP. VI. tained a most signal defeat near Medellin, and  
being driven to Almandralejo left the southern  
1809. frontier without protection. Marshal Victor,  
having by means of a light corps which passed  
the Tagus at Talavera dislodged the Spaniards  
15th Mar. from the strong line of the Ibor, and possessed  
himself of Miravete, threw a bridge over the  
Tagus at Almaraz, which enabled him to pass  
19th. over his artillery and collect his whole army  
at Truxillo: he then traversed the Guadiana  
at Medellin and attacked the Spaniards, who,  
under General Cuesta, coolly waited his ap-  
proach in a position between Don Benito and  
28th. Mingabril. The day was at first well contested:  
the French cavalry commenced the action by  
boldly charging the Spanish line, which stood  
firm and by a heavy fire forced the assailants  
back with loss; then immediately following up  
its success by a vigorous and concentrated at-  
tack of the French left wing, it gave way, and  
was followed with effect for two hours. The  
Spanish dragoons particularly distinguished  
themselves by boldness in the pursuit; but  
when the French, having arrived at a favourable  
point, faced about, they shamefully turned, and  
galloping past the infantry infected them with  
a similar panic; and in a moment the whole  
army dispersed, throwing away their arms, and  
seeking safety in disorderly flight. The French,  
enraged at the loss of 4,000 of their own num-

her killed or wounded, and mortified at having been triumphed over by men chiefly out of uniform, at first shewed little mercy to the fugitives, 9,000 of whom were sabred or bayoneted before they relaxed in their vengeance, when the submission of some thousand others was received. The preceding evening closed upon an equally tragic scene at Ciudad Real, a few leagues distant, at the dispersion and slaughter of the army of La Mancha by a corps under General Sebastiani: that officer in his official dispatch, though he states that the Spanish troops fled on the first charge without resistance, boasts to have sabred 3,000 of the fugitives. These events spread terror to the very gates of Seville, and, by the discontent they created amongst the Spaniards, threatened the dissolution of the government. The Supreme Junta, finding that proclamations and promises were insufficient to tranquillize the public mind, had recourse to the establishment of a Committee of Public Safety, to support their power; and shortly afterwards countenanced by their silence a most reprehensible edict of that body, denouncing the punishment of death and confiscation of property against all who should attempt to create distrust of the Supreme Central Junta, and offering rewards to informers, with the promise of never divulging their names. From the moment that the Junta thus at-

CHAP.  
 VI.  
 1809.

27th Mar.

15th April,

CHAP.

VI.

1809.

25th Mar.

Defence of  
Amarante.

2d April.

Every day, however, rendered his situation more embarrassing, as General Silveira, with his division of Portuguese troops, having forced the garrison of Chaves to surrender prisoners and blocked up his rear, was exerting every endeavour to strengthen the line of the Tamega and secure the bridge at Amarante, to cut off his only remaining communication with Spain. An attempt had been made with a detachment of 1500 men to gain that important point previously to the arrival of General Silveira; but the defensive arrangements of the Portuguese were so well combined, that the peasantry alone repulsed the assailants, killing and wounding many, and harassing them throughout their retreat to Penafiel and subsequently to Baltar. At length Marshal Soult, driven to the necessity of opening his communications, detached 6,000 men, under General Loison, to gain the bridge at any sacrifice. On the 17th of April a bold attack was made, and the Portuguese were speedily dislodged from the town; but every attempt to obtain possession of the bridge was rendered fruitless by the strength of the works which surrounded it, and by a destructive fire

Paris, Buonaparte addressed him by name at a grand levee at the Tuileries—"Take care how you draw up proclamations;—my empire is not yet sufficiently extended for my generals to become independent—one step further, and I would have caused you to have been shot."



the main body of the British at Leyria and the Portugueze army at Thomar. CHAP. VI.

Thus situated were the affairs of the Peninsula, when Sir Arthur Wellesley landed at Lisbon on the 22d of April, to assume the supreme command in Portugal; an appointment which opened a new era in the war, as it gave unity of action to the forces of the two nations, at the very time when the French were, from the growing extent of the field of operations, obliged to act on an opposite system. Already were the ill consequences of a division of force visible in their movements; the three armies of Soult, Victor, and Lapisse, which if acting in one body would before this period have triumphantly entered Lisbon, being disunited, and fearing to be separately committed, were losing the precious moments for action in suspense or petty movements. Marshal Soult long remained inactive at Oporto in the expectation of intelligence from his coadjutors, without which he did not deem it prudent to move forward.\*

1809.  
Sir A. Wellesley assumes the chief command.

Indecision of Soult.

\* It is understood that Marshal Soult at this time meditated to become Sovereign of Northern Lusitania, and that proclamations to such effect were printed off, if not circulated; it is beyond doubt that he favourably received a petition signed by several of the inhabitants soliciting from Buonaparté his nomination as Sovereign of Portugal. A French general officer told the writer, that an individual of Soult's staff, who was supposed to have been a principal agent in the affair, being-recalled to

CHAP. Every day, however, rendered his situation more

VI.

1809.

25th Mar.

Defence of  
Amarante.

2d April.

embarrassing, as General Silviera, with his division of Portuguese troops, having forced the garrison of Chaves to surrender prisoners and blocked up his rear, was exerting every endeavour to strengthen the line of the Tamega and secure the bridge at Amarante, to cut off his only remaining communication with Spain. An attempt had been made with a detachment of 1500 men to gain that important point previously to the arrival of General Silviera; but the defensive arrangements of the Portuguese were so well combined, that the peasantry alone repulsed the assailants, killing and wounding many, and harassing them throughout their retreat to Penafiel and subsequently to Baltar. At length Marshal Soult, driven to the necessity of opening his communications, detached 6,000 men, under General Loison, to gain the bridge at any sacrifice. On the 17th of April a bold attack was made, and the Portuguese were speedily dislodged from the town; but every attempt to obtain possession of the bridge was rendered fruitless by the strength of the works which surrounded it, and by a destructive fire

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from a fortified convent in its front. After a considerable loss of men, the attack was suspended for several days, whilst a mine was preparing under the defences; a little before daylight on the 29th of April, it was exploded, and made a breach, which the French infantry successfully assaulted, and the cavalry passing over drove the defenders beyond Villa-real.

CHAP.  
VI.  
1809.

2d May.

The movements of Lapisse and Victor were equally hesitating, whereas Sir Arthur, unfettered in his views, acted with decision; and on the seventh day after his landing, the British from Leyria, 16,000, and the Portuguese from Thomar, 6,000 in number, were in movement on Coimbra for the recovery of Oporto; a corps of 7,000 infantry, with a brigade of heavy cavalry and artillery, being detached to Abrantes to hold Victor's force in check. The main body of the British moved from Coimbra by the great road to Oporto on the 9th May; a strong division under General Hill having marched two days previously to embark at Aveira for Ovar, to prevent, by a flank movement the enemy from making any protracted resistance on the Vouga; and the Portuguese troops, with a British brigade, under Marshal Beresford, having at the same time proceeded by Vizeu to cross the Douro at Lamego and cut off Soult's best line of retreat from Oporto by Amarante. The French posts were first met about four or five miles beyond

Operations  
of Sir A.  
Wellesley.

29th April.

CHAP. VI. the Vouga on the 10th; and on the following day 4,000 infantry and some cavalry were dis-

1809. lodged from the strong ground above Grijou and were pursued with success till night, when the army halted—the advance on the heights beyond Carvalho, about seven miles from the Douro, and the rear divisions at St. Antonio de Arifana, twenty-five miles from the same point.

11th May.

Marshal Soult, on receiving intelligence of the repulse of his advanced corps, immediately commenced preparations to evacuate the country, and the same evening withdrew his posts from the left of the Douro, destroyed the floating bridge across the river, and hauled over to the right bank all the boats in the vicinity of the city; so that on the 12th, Sir Arthur found himself separated from his antagonist by a broad and rapid river, having no means with his army to effect the passage. Without an immediate decision Soult might retire on Galicia with little loss, or attack Marshal Beresford with his whole force and cross into Beira. To prevent this, Sir

Passage of  
the Douro.

12th.

Arthur planned and successfully executed the boldest passage of a river on record. He detached a brigade under General Murray to Avintas, five miles up the stream, where, if boats should not be found, a ford would admit of the troops crossing, and the Guards, under General Sherbrooke, to the ordinary ferry at Villa-nova, below the city; whilst from the

Serra convent, nearly opposite the town, he directed the passage of the main body in person. The river was at that spot nearly three hundred yards broad and extremely rapid, with considerable heights on the right bank. Two boats were, by the aid of the inhabitants, brought over from the enemy's side, and in these, protected by the fire of a brigade of light guns, three companies of the Buffs were, about one P.M. ferried across immediately above the convent. Soult, either despising the effort or believing it to be only a feint to draw his attention from the main object, did not oppose the landing, and even permitted Major General Paget to ascend the bank without opposition and place the troops in a formidable attitude in a large unfinished building. He then ordered a very considerable force to advance and dislodge them, but all their endeavours were fruitless, and the advanced guard maintained its post till other battalions had crossed the river to its support; the combat then became more equal, and was maintained with great spirit on both sides. General Paget received a most severe wound, and the command devolved on General Hill, who was still warmly engaged contesting the post, when the Guards were seen landing on the skirts of the town, and at the same moment the troops from Avintas were discovered approaching from the opposite quarter, on which

CHAP.

VI.

1809,

CHAP. VI. the assaulting columns, fearing to be cut off  
 1809. from the road of Valonga, instantly desisted and retired with all speed. Marshal Soult now perceived that he had been out-manceuvred, and pressed the evacuation of the town; but the Guards were already charging up the streets, capturing much baggage, and making many prisoners. The confusion and disorder that ensued amongst the French were far greater than can be readily imagined, and their panic seemed to increase as they gained the open country; so much so, that a single squadron of the 14th Dragoons, under Major Hervey, charged and cut their passage through three battalions of infantry, marching in a hollow road, and brought off many prisoners without sustaining any very considerable loss;\* indeed, all efforts at resistance seemed relinquished; when the approach of evening and the great fatigue the troops had undergone caused the pursuit to be suspended at Valonga, and gave a few hours for recovery.

Retreat of  
 Marshal  
 Soult.

13th May.

Marshal Soult's first endeavour was to effect his junction with General Loison, and retire by Amarante and Mirandela; but near Penafiel he met that officer in full retreat, having been dislodged from the Tamega the preceding evening

\* The French General Foy who commanded the brigade had two of his teeth knocked down his throat by the stroke of a sabre. Major Hervey lost an arm.

by Marshal Beresford's corps. The situation of the French army was then highly critical, as columns of the allies were marching on the only roads practicable for artillery; the British from Oporto on those of Valençay, Braga and Guimaraens, and the Portuguese from Amarante on that of Chaves, with almost the certainty of preceding its arrival at those towns, and a considerable body of Portuguese troops being already in possession of the latter place. In this dilemma, Marshal Soult, without hesitation, destroyed part of his artillery and caissons, hoping, by a march across the country, to reach Braga before the British; but when at Guimaraens, finding that he had gained only three or four hours, and that the British cavalry would speedily fall on his rear, he made the sacrifice of all his remaining artillery, wheel carriages, and other incumbrances, even to his baggage and military chest, and in that light order struck into a difficult footpath over the mountains on his right, not far from the defile of Carvalho, which led him into the high road to Chaves near Salamonde just before his pursuers, who at night-fall came up in sufficient force to skirmish with his rear and make some prisoners. He then bivouacked his army in the mountains near the village for a few hours, and next morning, before day-break, continued his march along the main road to a point where a cross-

CHAP.

VI.

1809.

13th May.

14th.

16th.

## CHAP.

## VI.

1809.

country communication branches off to the left to Montalegre; into this latter he turned to avoid the Portuguese force waiting his approach at Chaves; and filing his troops along a path in many places only of sufficient breadth for the passage of a single individual, a perpendicular rock bounding one side and a deep ravine the other, his advanced guard reached the bridge of Saltador over the Cabado in time to prevent its demolition by the peasantry who were found labouring to effect it. That bridge, extending over a deep precipice, is exceedingly narrow and without protection on either side; during the passage a fire of artillery from the British column was heard, and a blind panic seized the retiring force. The cavalry pressed over without consideration for the infantry; multitudes were precipitated into the torrent beneath; many threw away their arms, others their ammunition, and all thought for the future seemed lost in anxiety to cross this frightful chasm. Five days of extreme suffering, caused by the inclemency of the weather, the hostility of the natives, and the closeness of the pursuit, had totally disorganized the retiring force. Notwithstanding that rain had fallen in torrents from the commencement of the retreat, the soldiers had scarcely been under cover; their periods of repose, limited to five or six hours, had been wiled away in cold and cheerless

17th May.



CHAP.  
VI.  
1809.

bivouacs in a state of watchful anxiety, and almost their only sustenance had been derived from unground corn. These privations and hardships had sunk their spirits and exhausted their strength; no authority could induce a single company or squadron to form into a rear guard, and the troops assembled on the right bank of the Cabado nearly as a defenceless mob. In that state it was little subject of congratulation that they had passed the principal impediment to escape from the British, as they were wholly unable to cope with the Portuguese, who from Chaves might easily bar their road or occupy Montalegre before them; but the energies of Marshal Soult rose with the difficulties he had to encounter, and once more pursuing <sup>17th May.</sup> an intricate road over the mountains, he avoided further loss from the pursuit of the British, who, on account of their artillery and commissariat were obliged to march by Ruivães, and had the good fortune to precede the Portuguese at Montalegre. The following morning, after <sup>18th</sup> a march of two hours followed by the British, he recrossed the frontier, where the pursuit terminated, as a more important object in the south demanded the return of the army.\* Marshal

\* The conduct of this retreat does infinite honour to the talents and decision of Marshal Soult; but it is evident that had the Portuguese troops at Chaves been active in obeying

CHAP. Victor, having been joined by Lapisse's division  
 VI. from Salamanca, had forced the passage of the  
 1809. Tagus on the 12th May at Alcantara, and after  
 a resistance highly creditable to the Portugeze  
 under Colonel Mayne, had driven them to Lo-  
 diera, and now seriously threatened Lisbon.  
 At the same time Marshal Mortier was moving  
 into Castile with the greater part of the troops  
 that had carried on the siege of Zaragossa, and  
 might advance to his support. The British  
 army in consequence retraced their steps and  
 reached the banks of the Tagus early in June,  
 when Victor retired on Merida;\* and Sir Arthur  
 having thus a second time freed Portugal turned  
 his attention to aid the cause of Spain.

Exertions of  
 the Gali-  
 cians.

Previously, however, to narrating the further  
 movements of the British, various heroic but

the orders sent them by Sir A. Wellesley, and had taken up  
 one of the almost impregnable positions to be found near  
 Salamonde, that the very sacrifices which enabled the French  
 army to outmarch the British, would have led to their destruc-  
 tion; as without artillery or ammunition they could not have  
 forced their passage through the Portugeze, and must have  
 surrendered prisoners on the approach of the British.


10th June.

\* On a subsequent reconnoissance made by the French,  
 one of the arches of the superb bridge of Trajan over the Tagus  
 at Alcantara was blown down. The piers are eighty feet  
 apart and more than that height from the bed of the river,  
 the sides of which being formed by almost perpendicular rocks,  
 this passage over the Tagus henceforward became useless to  
 either of the belligerents till repaired by the British in 1812.

unconnected efforts at resistance made by the Spaniards alone claim a particular detail. Galicia was the theatre on which the perseverance and constancy of their character most fully displayed themselves. The half-naked disorganized band, preserved by the Marquis de la Romana at the period of the retreat of the British, waiting the favourable moment, not only inflicted a severe vengeance on the intruders, but ultimately, being well seconded by the courage and patriotism of the inhabitants, drove them out of the province. As soon as Soult's corps entered Portugal and Ney's alone remained, the Spaniards began to act. A force under Murillo, with a body of Portuguese, invested Vigo at the end of March, and aided by a British frigate, quickly forced the garrison of 1300 men to surrender; and the following day nearly annihilated under the walls a French battalion that approached from Tuy unconscious of the event. Romana himself quitted Sana-bria the moment Soult was too far advanced into Portugal to return, and with a single field-piece obliged two battalions to surrender prisoners on the 17th April, that attempted to hold the palace of the Duke of Alva at Villa Franca. He then crossed over to the Asturias, which province, from the imbecility of the local Junta, remained in a state of inaction, and on the 22d of April, by virtue of his military au-

CHAB.  
 VI.  
 1809.

27th March.

CHAP. VI.  1809. thority, dissolved the government as unworthy to rule, and appointed another composed of more active members.

Marshal Ney and the French commanders in Leon, on ascertaining this movement of Romana's, deemed the opportunity favourable to surround and annihilate his army; with that hope they made a simultaneous and concerted advance on every point of the principality, and on the same day, the 18th May, three detachments entered Oviedo by different roads. The Marquis, on their approach, withdrew to Gijon and embarked; and the French had the mortification to learn that he had also saved his troops from their pursuit. Feeling that in the Asturias, bounded on all sides by the sea or by the enemy's corps, his army would be useless to the general cause, and in the event of being attacked by superior numbers would be without retreat, he had, on intelligence of Ney's movements, countermarched it by a mountainous track into Galicia, with orders to blockade Lugo. That measure was so unlooked for by the garrison, and the place was so ill-provided that it was on the point of capitulating for want of provisions, when, on the 22d May, the troops under Marshal Soult most unexpectedly made their appearance and obliged the Spaniards to raise the blockade. It has been mentioned that the soldiery of Soult's army, whilst on their retreat out

of Portugal, irritated by the unceasing hostility of the peasantry, laid no restraint on their vengeance, burning the villages and putting to death those who fell into their power, the knowledge of which outstripping their march caused all the inhabitants, even beyond the frontier, to flee on their approach. This general desertion considerably augmented the difficulties and privations they had to encounter, and on their arrival before Lugo they were so disorganized, so ill-clothed, so badly armed, and in such general distress, that the French garrison would not, till some of the officers made themselves personally recognized, believe them to be other than a collection of Spaniards. Soult bivouacked his troops for some days round the town to refresh; and on the return of Ney from the Asturias, the two Marshals concerted a general movement of their armies to sweep through the whole of Galicia, and put down all opposition in the province.

On the 2d June, Soult commenced the pursuit of Romana's force by Monforte, Ponteferrada and Viana, constantly seeing his rear guard depart as he entered each place, and constantly expecting to out-march him on the next day; but he was ever baffled by the superior activity of his opponent and his more accurate knowledge of the country. The inhabitants materially contributed to Romana's evasion, acting in the most hostile manner towards the

CHAP.  
VI.  
1809.

22d May.

Pursuit of  
La Romana.

CHAP. French and rendering every assistance to the  
 VI. fugitives; at length Soult having been for three  
 1809. weeks baffled in all his attempts, relinquished  
 the enterprize and returned on the 24th June  
 to Sanabria; from whence, having been five  
 months cut off from all communication with his  
 government, he proceeded to Zamora to re-  
 organize his force and be in a situation to co-  
 operate with the other armies. Marshal Ney  
 was even more unsuccessful than Soult: having  
 marched with the principal part of his forces,  
 about 7000 men, in the opposite direction, to  
 recover Vigo, he was opposed by a corps of La  
 Romana's troops under General Noronha, about  
 13,000 in number, which on his approach retired  
 behind the river Sotomayor, and destroyed the  
 bridge at St. Payo. The French, throughout the  
 7th June, endeavoured to cross on the ruined  
 piers, but every attempt was checked by a fire of  
 musketry and artillery from the opposite bank.  
 8th June. The following day they renewed their efforts  
 with no better success, on which they sent a de-  
 tachment to surprise the bridge at Caldelas, about  
 six miles higher up the stream, and another to  
 ford the river near its mouth at low water: on  
 both these points the Spaniards were prepared to  
 receive them, and after some heavy firing the  
 French relinquished the attempt; at night, having  
 set fire to all the houses and establishments on  
 the banks of the river, they retired on St. Jago,

followed by a party of Noronha's force. After this the Spanish leaders and the peasantry redoubled their exertions, and Marshal Ney finding his troops totally discouraged by the nature of the war, evacuated Corunna and Ferrol on the 22d June, and retired out of the province.


CHAP.

VI.

1809.

These successes were clouded by a severe check on the side of Valencia, where a fine and well appointed army had been assembled. The command was entrusted to General Blake, who confidently advanced with it to recover Zaragossa. Being repulsed in the attempt on the 15th June, and harassed on his retreat by General Suchet, who had been left in command of the province, he halted, after two days' march, on the heights of St. Maria, above Belchite, and placing one division in the town, which he barricadoed for defence, ventured the issue of a general action. The young and raw Valencians in position, without confidence in themselves, wavered on the approach of the French cavalry, and dispersed at the first charge; those in the town, discouraged at the sight, abandoned their post after a short resistance, and the whole fled, leaving their arms, ammunition and artillery on the field; but, with a patriotism which no discouragement could subdue, they individually returned to their homes and again enrolled themselves. This triumph cost the victors only 310 in killed and wounded.

Action at  
Belchite.

CHAP. VI.  1809. The Catalans, after the defeat of their army at the conclusion of the last year, having nothing to oppose to the French but their individual courage, everywhere exerted themselves to the utmost, and displayed such spirit and enterprise, that St. Cyr confined his operations to the siege of Gerona, the brave defenders of which, though deprived of all hope of relief, from the defeat of the Valencian army just narrated, continued to resist with an obstinacy proportioned to the increased means the French used against them; who, instructed by their previous failure, conducted this attack with far greater vigour than the former.

Supplies  
sent from  
England.

England persevered with unbounded munificence in supplying the wants of the patriots, and was probably of more value to Spain than if forming an integral portion of her territory. Within twelve months from the commencement of the war she sent over to the Spanish armies (besides £2,000,000 sterling) 150 pieces of field-artillery, with 42,000 rounds of ammunition, 200,000 muskets, 61,000 swords, 79,000 pikes, 23½ millions of ball-cartridges, 6,000,000 leaden balls, 15,000 barrels of gunpowder, 92,000 suits of clothing, 356,000 sets of accoutrements and pouches, 310,000 pairs of shoes, 37,000 pairs of boots, 40,000 tents, 250,000 yards of cloth, 10,000 sets of camp-equipage, 118,000 yards of of linen, 50,000 great coats, 50,000 canteens,



54,000 havresacks, with a variety of other stores, far too numerous to be recapitulated.

CHAP.  
VI.  
1809.

The Spanish government also acted most nobly, and displayed the utmost wisdom and firmness in the midst of the national misfortunes. Far from despairing of their country from the loss of the battle of Medellin, they emulated the conduct of the Roman Senate, when similarly circumstanced by the success of Hannibal, and noticing only the good conduct of the troops in the early part of the day, decreed the thanks of the nation to the brave army of Estremadura, and pointed it out to the other corps as an example worthy of imitation.—Cuesta was raised by the decree to the rank of Captain-General; promotion was granted to all officers whose conduct had merited his approbation, and a badge of distinction, with a gratuity of one month's pay, was accorded to each of the battalions engaged, and pensions were assigned to the widows and orphans of those who had fallen. These wise measures were attended with the best effects, and from the wreck of the defeated armies 45,000 infantry and 8000 cavalry quickly reassembled in Estremadura. The command of this force was entrusted to General Cuesta, who, with a just and laudable severity, punished with death many of the run-aways at Medellin, and established a degree of

Wise con-  
duct of the  
Junta.

CHAP. discipline and subordination that promised to  
 VI. render the Spaniards formidable in the field.

1809. In aid of so desirable a change, a numerous and  
 Guerrillas—most valuable auxiliary force had spontaneously  
 arisen throughout the Peninsula. When the  
 their origin. French, after their first successes, were obliged  
 to separate and spread over the country in small  
 bodies, in order to subsist and keep the inhabi-  
 tants in subjection, various acts of oppression and  
 injustice were the consequences; these were indi-  
 vidually and partially resisted, and deadly strife  
 followed on both sides. Such of the Spaniards  
 as most distinguished themselves in this opposi-  
 tion, or who killed any of the intruders, were  
 obliged to flee to the mountains to escape chas-  
 tisement from the French dragoons, which were  
 immediately detached from the nearest station for  
 that purpose. Many of these fugitives were pro-  
 scribed, but being often compelled by hunger to  
 descend to their homes or to the habitations of  
 their friends, they frequently encountered par-  
 ties of the French, which, if weaker than them-  
 selves, were sacrificed to their just vengeance;  
 but if stronger, the Spaniards fled, and such as  
 were overtaken were invariably put to death.\*

\* An occurrence of such a nature transformed Julian San-  
 chez, a simple peasant of the province of Salamanca, into a  
 daring leader:—Accidentally meeting with a French Colonel,  
 whom he recollected to have seen employed in command of a  
 detachment which had burned his native village for the con-

Thus by degrees bands of desperate men collected and set an example of resistance, which, when by long continuance the exactions and oppressions of the intruders became intolerable, led to the formation in the mountainous districts of a general and extended system of the same nature of opposition. Hundreds of the most spirited of the young men united themselves into bands, serving without pay, under leaders selected from amongst themselves:—these having a perfect knowledge of the country, and being undistinguished by any uniform, assembled or dispersed at pleasure; every where opposing small bodies of the French, cutting off their provisions, and interrupting their communications, but being themselves intangible to any superior force sent to annihilate them.\*

CHAP.  
VI.  
1809.

tumacy of its inhabitants, he stabbed him with his own hand; and, from that moment, became a desperate outlaw. The barbarous murder of his whole family by the intruders made honest Juan Martin the revengeful Empecinado. Manslaughter in defence of his flock changed a harmless goatherd into the wily Pastor—and similar circumstances created most of the other leaders.

\* From engaging in this petty warfare only, they obtained the appellation of guerrillas, little war-makers or warriors.—The Marquis de la Romana warmly encouraged and fostered this system of harassing the intruders almost from the moment of his arrival; but the credit of having first counselled it is due to the Junta of Seville, which, at the commencement of the struggle, published a code of instructions, pointing it out to the

CHAP. VI. Thus, at the commencement of the summer,  
 1809. the aspect of affairs, under every view, had materially changed in favour of the Spaniards: The recently comparative inaction of the enemy had allayed the distrust generated amongst the military by the reverses of the winter, and the population, buoyed up by exaggerated statements of various petty successes, were prepared, on the slightest impulse, openly to manifest their hostility to the intruders.

The resources of the government had also improved by the recovery of Galicia and by a pecuniary offering from the American Colonies; whereas Buonaparte, in the prosecution of the war with Austria, had met with a severe repulse at Esling, on the Danube, necessitating the employment of all his reserves to regain the ascendancy.

May 22d.

The Supreme Junta, elated with the flattering prospect, resumed their former confidence, and having decided to attempt the recovery of their capital, solicited a forward movement also on the part of the British. The moment being most auspicious for the Spaniards to measure

people as the most advantageous mode to oppose the French disciplined troops, and recommending the whole population to organize themselves into bands: it would however appear, that fortuitous circumstances, with the spreading of the intruders and the protraction of the contest, alone rendered the guerrilla warfare formidable.

their strength with the intruders, and for Eng-  
land to put the value of their military co-opera-  
tion fairly to the test, Lord Wellington entered  
into their views, and decided to avail himself of  
a discretionary power, with which he was in-  
vested, to combine a plan of occasional concert  
with the Spanish armies, without hazarding the  
safety of Portugal, considered the primary ob-  
ject of the British military operations in the  
Peninsula.

CHAP.  
VI.  
1809.



## CHAPTER VII.

*The Armies of General Cuesta and Lord Wellington unite to engage the French—come into contact with a Corps on the Alberche—General Cuesta declines to attack—the French retire in the Night on other Corps—the Spaniards pursue them—are driven back on the English—the united Armies take up a Position in front of Talavera—are vigorously attacked by Joseph Buonaparte—repulse every Effort to force them—the French withdraw—the Corps of Marshal Soult, Ney and Mortier arrive at Plasencia through the Pass of Banos—the British retire unmolested to Jaraicejo—Want of Food forces them back to Badajos—the Spaniards defeated at Almonacid and Ocana—Distrust created by the Measures of the Supreme Junta—Observations on the Cortes—Lord Wellington named Marshal General of the Lusitanian Forces—moves his Army to the Coa—Defence of Gerona—Conduct of the Supreme Junta.*

CHAP.  
VII.

1809. **T**HE amount of the French force within the Pyrenees in June, 1809, was 155,000; of which number 40,000 were in Aragon and Catalonia, and 10,000 in various garrisons and posts, to maintain the communications throughout the country, leaving about 105,000 as the force absolutely in the field: of these, 10,000 were in the neighbourhood of Madrid, 23,000 under Marshal Victor on the Tagus, and 18,000 under General Sebastiani in La Mancha; the remainder, under Marshals Ney, Soult, and

Strength of  
the French.

Mortier, being in Galicia, Old Castile, and the kingdom of Leon. CHAP. VII.

After various projects for an offensive movement had been canvassed between the Spanish and British commanders, Sir Arthur Wellesley agreed to unite his army, 19,000 infantry and 1500 cavalry, with that of General Cuesta, 30,000 infantry and 7000 cavalry, to fight an action with the corps covering Madrid on the south, and open a road for the Spaniards to move on the capital, it being clearly explained that the British pledged themselves to no further combined operation than fighting one great battle. To favour this measure, General Vaneegas, with 14,000 Spaniards, was to make a diversion on Aranjuez, to cause the enemy to divide their forces. Detachments of Spanish troops were likewise to take post at Perales and Baños, to interrupt the communication through those passes between the French troops in the north and those about to be attacked; the Portuguese army under Marshal Beresford, about 12,000 strong, being directed to assemble behind the Agueda, and a British brigade to take post at Coria, to aid the Spaniards in watching those important points.\* Further,

1809.  
Plan of  
operations.  
12th June.

\* It must be recollected, that the evacuation of Galicia by Marshal Ney had not taken place when this arrangement was made, and that the force to guard the passes was allotted on the supposition that little more than Soult's army from Portugal was disposable on the side of Salamanca.

CHAP. VII. the Lusitanian Legion, under Sir Robert Wilson, reinforced to 5000 men by some battalions of Spanish light troops, was destined to act independently on the flanks or rear of the enemy, whilst the combined armies made their attack in front. As no sufficient commissariat establishment could be formed to carry forward supplies compatible with the rapid movement in contemplation, reliance was placed for the support of both armies on agents appointed by the Spanish government, who, with an imposing confidence, affirmed that they could without difficulty collect the means of regularly meeting every demand.

The armies  
advance.

In pursuance of this plan, the British moved from Plasencia on the 18th of July, the soldiers carrying three days provisions, and on the 20th effected their junction at Oropesa with Cuesta's army, which had crossed the river at Almaraz and Arzobispo. On the 22d the united armies advanced, driving before them Marshal Victor's corps, which took up a position on the Alberche, and gave opportunity to realize all the expectations that had dictated the plan of the campaign. Sir Arthur most strenuously urged that an attack should be made on the morning of the 23d, but General Cuesta, on the most frivolous pretences, determined to delay an action till the following day; the British general entreated, nay, supplicated, that he would not lose the favourable opportunity that presented itself, and even put



his own forces in movement to stimulate him on ; but in vain—the old gentleman was obstinately bent on delay, and, apparently lethargic, fell asleep during the conference and could not be roused ; the attack was in consequence deferred, and Marshal Victor, gaining intelligence that Sir Robert Wilson was at Escalona in his rear, fell back as soon as it became dark.

CHAP.  
VII.  
1809.

Already the inability of the Spaniards to fulfil their engagement to supply the troops began to be severely felt ; since the junction of the armies the delivery of provisions had been trifling and irregular ; for the last two days no issue of any kind had been made to the British, and no arrangement appeared for their future support ; under such circumstances, to march forward was to risk destruction from famine, and the halt of a day or two was decided. General Cuesta, however, deeming his own force sufficient to pursue the corps which he had declined to attack, put his army in movement by Santa Olalla.

Distress for  
food.

24th July.

Joseph Buonaparte, on receiving intelligence, on the 22d July, of the march of the allies from Talavera, sent instructions to Marshal Soult to assemble at Salamanca the corps of Ney and Mortier, making with his own, eighty battalions and thirty squadrons,\* and move on the flank

\* Marshal Jourdan, in his official report, states the number of effective men in the three corps to have exceeded 66,000.

CHAP. of the advancing armies through the pass of  
VII. Baños, and the same evening quitted Madrid to  
1809. oppose them in front with the Royal Guard, a  
brigade of infantry and a regiment of dragoons.  
At Toledo he was joined on the 25th by the  
corps of Marshal Victor and General Sebastiani,  
and on the 26th, leaving a garrison of 2000 men  
in the city, the whole advanced to Torrijos.  
At that place General Cuesta came into contact  
with the French advanced guard; three regi-  
ments of Spanish Hussars, entangled in a defile,  
were in a few minutes cut to pieces, and he only  
saved his army from destruction by a hurried re-  
treat to the Alberche, where two divisions of in-  
fantry and some cavalry sent forward by the  
British Commander lent him support. Cuesta  
then bivouacked his troops on the low ground on  
the left bank, and in that unfavourable position,  
with the river in his rear, decided to accept  
battle; representation and entreaty were vain  
to induce him to move to a better position, or  
even to cross the river and occupy the hills on  
the right bank; his constant reply was, "in  
these times a retiring army is always beaten."  
Sir Arthur, therefore, seeing a battle inevitable,  
decided to leave him to his fate, and ordered  
his own forces to fall back, on the 27th, to a  
strong position which he had observed near  
Talavera in a reconnoissance made during the  
advance. This movement had the desired effect,  
as on the approach of the French, General

Cuesta, feeling the peril of his situation, fell back also and united the two armies.

CHAP.  
VII.

1809.

Battle of  
Talavera.  
27th July.

The position was about two miles in length, extending perpendicularly from the Tagus, on which the right rested, the ground in its front being intersected with such deep ravines and enclosures as to be nearly impracticable, and the town of Talavera in its rear being partly walled. The centre was more open, but the left terminated favourably on a bold and commanding height, overlooking a considerable valley which separated the left of the position from a range of rocky mountains. To the Spaniards was allotted the right and to the British the left. The former being, from the inequalities of the ground they occupied, almost secure from attack, were so posted in the ravines as to be sheltered from a cannonade; the latter were formed along the crest of the position, the left, under General Hill, being placed on the commanding feature before-mentioned. To secure the point of junction between the two armies, cover was thrown up for eight or ten guns on an elevated knoll, and two brigades of British infantry, with General Cotton's brigade of cavalry and a body of Spaniards were allotted for its support. The intermediate space between this point and the left of the British was occupied by the Guards, King's German Legion and General Cameron's brigade under Lieutenant General Sherbrooke.

CHAP. The artillery (thirty pieces) were distributed by  
VII. brigades of six pieces on the projecting knolls  
1809. in front of the line; two brigades, however, being united for the defence of the hill on the left. The remainder of the cavalry, (four regiments,) under Lieutenant General Payne, were directed to form in reserve in rear of the left of the position, in readiness to move into the valley.

Early in the afternoon of the 27th, the French crossed the Alberche in three columns in beautiful style; four battalions of British and some cavalry, under Major General M'Kenzie, posted as an advanced guard on the right of the river to watch their movements, finding themselves about to be attacked in overpowering force, gave way. Sir A. Wellesley, who had ascended a tower in their immediate rear for the purposes of observation, luckily saw them falter, and descended just in time to avoid being made prisoner, as with difficulty he remounted his horse in the midst of the affray. The French pushed forward with great spirit; their artillery was particularly active and well served, galloping from point to point, and occasioned considerable loss to the troops before they reached the position. The infantry brigade, under Colonel Donkin, took up ground on the right of the knoll forming the extreme left, with so much regularity and steadiness that their pursuers halted at a respectful distance, and General M'Kenzie's

brigade with equal regularity took post as a second line to the centre. The cavalry filed to the rear along a road at the junction of the two armies, and the French dragoons who were closely following, making a bravado against the Spanish line, a whole division of 5,000 men, posted behind almost insurmountable obstacles, supposing themselves about to be charged, and believing that the British cavalry had gone off, threw down their arms and fled to the rear; the Spanish artillery and ammunition waggons, to the number of a hundred and twenty, followed their example, and spread confusion and dismay for miles around.\*

CHAP.  
VII.  
1809.

Under these favourable circumstances, in the course of the evening, 47,000 French troops assembled in front of the position of the allies, commanded by Joseph Buonaparte in person, having under his orders Marshals Jourdan and Victor, and General Sebastiani. A reconnoissance took place under a heavy cannonade, and a partial attack was made on the right, to ascertain in what force it was occupied; and it may be presumed that the height on the left of the British was discovered to be the most important

\* General Cuesta was so indignant at this dastardly behaviour, that after the action he caused the division to be decimated, and it was only by much entreaty from Lord Wellington that he consented to decimate again those on whom the lot had fallen, actually executing six officers and about thirty men.

CHAP. point of the position, as twice during the night  
VII. bodies of infantry were pushed across the valley  
1809. to gain possession of it. At the first attack, though made with three regiments only, it being unexpected, and the French troops advancing with rapidity and boldness, they succeeded in forcing the defenders off the summit, and were forming thereon when a brigade, brought up from the other side by General Hill, charged into the midst of them; it being dark, little order could be preserved, but every individual gallantly exerted himself, and the French were, after a sharp struggle dislodged, leaving the knoll covered with slain. The second attack, repeated at the interval of some hours, was made with a stronger force; but the troops on the hill being prepared to receive it, and Colonel Donkin's brigade in the interval between the attacks having been moved close up to their support, the assailants were without difficulty repulsed.

28th July. Day-light in the morning of the 28th discovered the two armies in order of battle, on nearly parallel heights, merely separated on the left of the British by a strong ravine, which gradually diminished towards the right till it ended in a gulley or dry water-course. About six o'clock a discharge from fifty pieces of cannon showered on the British line from a distance of 600 yards, and under their continued fire, two divisions of infantry, about 13,000 men, boldly advanced across

the ravine to dislodge General Hill's force; but when ascending the height, after some heavy firing of musquetry, they were rushed upon with the bayonet, and driven down with great slaughter. The loss of the defenders was also very considerable, as during their formation to oppose the infantry, the enemy's artillery unceasingly swept through their ranks; after this struggle their numbers were found barely sufficient to protect the front of the hill, and the French were observed to be pouring fresh troops into the valley on their flank. Sir Arthur, to be prepared to resist these fresh efforts, rode to the centre, and representing to General Cuesta that the whole force of the enemy was directed against the British, obtained his consent for a strong body of Spanish cavalry being placed in reserve in the valley on the left flank of the position, and that a division of 3000 Spanish troops should occupy the hills beyond it. In these and other various arrangements for attack and defence, the time passed till eleven o'clock, when the French regularly cooked and ate their dinners, whilst the British and Spaniards, less abundantly provided, endeavoured to repose on the ground after their fatigues. Both armies seized the opportunity afforded by this cessation of fire to send parties to bring in their wounded, who, from the closeness of the combat, lay intermingled; and after such a fierce and obstinate

CHAP.  
VII.  
1809.

CHAP. VII.  
1809. contention, it was cheering to observe those employed on this duty of humanity suspend all feeling of hostility and strive who should be most active in aiding the other to extricate the sufferers.

At two o'clock the work of destruction again commenced with a heavy cannonade. One division of dragoons only being left to observe the Spaniards, the whole of the French infantry formed into solid masses, to make a general attack on the British line, whilst the main body of their cavalry paraded in the rear, to complete the victory by an overwhelming charge on whichever point should first be penetrated. In about an hour the whole were in movement.

The French commander, become sensible of the insufficiency of a front attack only of the height on the left, now directed the divisions of Generals Ruffin and Villate, with some cavalry, to march in column along the valley and turn its left flank, whilst the whole of Victor's corps and the reserve, should attack the division on its right: at the same time numerous light troops were detached to make a wide flank movement along the range of rocky heights beyond the left of the position and threaten its rear generally. Desperate cases justify desperate remedies, and numbers appearing too unequal to trust solely to the exertions of the infantry against such an effort, General Anson's brigade of cavalry (the



23d Light Dragoons and 1st Hussars King's German Legion) was directed to charge the formidable bodies moving up the valley at the moment that they should attempt to deploy. Both regiments instantly on the receipt of the order gallantly pushed forward without consideration of the irregularities of the ground or of the formation of the enemy; the 23d Regiment, unchecked by a heavy fire of musquetry, passed between two columns of infantry, and by weight and rapidity of movement, bore down the 10th Regiment of Chasseurs, when, being surrounded, it was almost entirely destroyed; the Germans also suffered most severely. The French Generals, notwithstanding the failure of the charge, were so astonished by the boldness of the manœuvre and the courage displayed by the troops, that they halted their columns of attack; and their light troops, turning the flank of the position, being checked by the Spaniards detached for that purpose, this imposing movement, which threatened the destruction of the army, produced no results whatever.

Simultaneously with this attack, the corps of General Sebastiani formed in column, advanced against the right of the British line, near the redoubt connecting the two armies, which Brigadier General Alexander Campbell's brigade and two Spanish battalions were enabled by the strength of the ground to oppose, and after a severe

CHAP.  
VII.  
1809.

CHAP. struggle with varied success drove back with the  
VII. bayonet; when the Spanish regiment of cavalry,  
1809. del Rey, making a handsome charge, captured twelve guns and sabred many men. The artillery also materially added to the casualties of the routed column, as eighteen pieces of ordnance, collected into two batteries, under Lieutenant Colonel Robe, played obliquely on their flank, and by accuracy of fire continued the work of destruction long after the musquets of the infantry had ceased to have effect.

Shortly after the check given to the French divisions advancing up the valley to turn the height on the left of the position, the corps of Marshal Victor directed its movements against the centre of the British line: one column composed chiefly of German troops deployed before they attempted to ascend the position, and then supported by the remainder of the corps advanced, exposed to a most galling fire of artillery, in as steady and regular a manner as the rough ground over which they marched would admit, appearing determined to maintain the high reputation they had acquired by their conduct on other occasions; but Lieutenant General Sherbrooke, having fully prepared his men, received them with a volley of musquetry which staggered their resolution, and the whole division instantly rushing forward with the bayonet the assailants were driven back with prodigious

slaughter. The brigade of Guards, in the ardour of pursuit advancing beyond the rest of the line, was attacked in overwhelming force by the French reserve, and so cut up by a close fire of artillery from a wood, that in a few minutes more than 500 men and officers were killed or wounded, and the destruction of the brigade seemed inevitable; but Sir Arthur having foreseen the risk to which their impetuous movements was likely to expose them, had ordered the 48th Regiment from the left, and General Cotton's brigade of cavalry from the right to their support, and the Guards, entirely broken, found safety by passing to their rear; the assailants then turned their main efforts against the 48th, but every attack was firmly repelled, till the Guards, having gained time to recover their formation, advanced with cheers to the aid of their protectors; the French on their approach gave way and were pursued far back, notwithstanding the support of a strong body of cavalry and artillery. Thus discomfited at every point, and having two generals, an unusual number of superior officers, and nearly 10,000 men killed or wounded, the enemy concentrated on their position and made some movements towards the Alberche indicating a retreat; but an occasional heavy cannonade and much firing between the light troops still continued, and the sun which rose upon this

CHAP.  
VII.  
1809.

CHAP. fierce contention left it raging at its going  
VII. down.

1809.

The close and well-directed fire of the enemy's numerous artillery, kept up with little intermission throughout the day, was far more trying to the constancy than their bold attacks to the courage of the troops. Seldom a shot passed harmless over the field, and their rapid succession must have been attended with annihilation, had not Sir Arthur, trusting to the steadiness of the men, kept the different brigades in a recumbent posture behind the crest of the hill, and only exposed them to its full effect on the approach of the enemy's columns. The strength of the British force on occupying the position admitted of a second line, but during the contest more than a fourth of their number had fallen or been disabled, and when evening closed, reserves could with difficulty be obtained to cover the most open points of a single weak line.

The day, which had been exceedingly hot, was succeeded by a night chill and damp from heavy dew, and the troops reposed in position on the ground, amidst the dead and dying, without food or covering; but having seen their commander throughout the day firmly remain with the front rank, even till forced at one moment by the near approach of a French column to unsheath his sword in self-defence, and knowing

him to be now supporting equal privation with themselves, not a murmur was heard; and though probably all sincerely wished that the enemy might have retired, not one expressed or felt an apprehension for the result of another struggle. At daylight the troops were again under arms in order of battle, but only two divisions of the enemy could be discovered, posted as a rear guard on the left of the Alberche; the main body having retired in the night on the road of St. Olallo, leaving twenty pieces of artillery on different parts of the field: and thus terminated one of the most obstinate and hard fought battles of modern times.—To the Spaniards equally as to the British the honour of the day is due; they actively covered the ground beyond the extreme left; the few engaged behaved well, and the presence of their main body without doubt retained a portion of the French army in position and prevented their combining in the attack of the left. Making, however, the most liberal deduction on this account, it may be fairly stated that 18,000 British troops sustained unbroken, for a whole day, the utmost efforts of double their number of the elite of the French army. The ground being open and little manœuvring practised, the disparity of force was so evident to the assailants, that, although a variety of palliations were attempted, every man and officer felt

CHAP.  
VII.  
1809.

Retreat of  
the enemy.

CHAP. his previous confidence in himself shaken ; and  
 VII. it is believed that the events of the day made  
 1809. so great an impression on their ruler as to influence a change in his general policy.\*

In this desperate struggle, the British lost above 5000 men, of whom between 7 and 800 were killed: two general officers, M'Kenzie and Langworth fell, and three others were wounded. The Spaniards had about 1200 killed or wounded.†  
 29th The day after the action, General Crauford joined from Lisbon, by the road of Plasencia, with a troop of horse artillery and 3000 infantry, having, in his zeal to aid in the further discomfiture of

\* Monsieur Talleyrand, Prince of Benavente, at that period the French minister of foreign affairs, asserts, that when Napoleon became acquainted with the details of the battle of Talavera, added to the check he had a little previously sustained at Esling, he was forcibly struck with the little stability of a throne resting on military success alone, without family, connection, or hereditary claims:—he felt that the English were powerful competitors and might turn the scale in Spain, and he decided to strengthen his private interests by an alliance with one of the great sovereigns. For some months it was in contemplation to seek the hand of a Russian grand duchess; but after much discussion, it was decided in the council to make proposals for the Archduchess Maria Louisa.

† Sir Arthur Wellesley was on the 26th August, for his conduct on this day, elevated to the peerage of the United Kingdom, by the title of Viscount Wellington of Talavera, and of Wellington in the county of Somerset, and Baron Douro. At the end of February, 1810, the legislature settled an annuity of £2000 a year upon his Lordship.

the enemy, made the extraordinary exertion of forty-eight miles in twenty-four hours; but the scarcity of provisions was so extreme, that the allied armies were incapable of following up their hardly earned victory and remained immoveable at Talavera.

CHAP.  
VIL  
1809.

General Vanegas, having been prevented by counter orders from the Junta from pushing on towards Madrid by Fuente Dueñas, as arranged by General Cuesta and Sir Arthur Wellesley when they commenced their march, had, during the action at Talavera, been as active as his instructions would permit, bombarding Toledo and endeavouring to dislodge the French garrison. On the retreat of the French he moved to his right, when Marshal Victor's corps halted at Maqueda, and Joseph Buonaparte, with the reserve and Sebastiani's corps, took up a position at Illescas <sup>1st Aug.</sup> as a central point to keep him in check and support Victor till the arrival of Marshal Soult, to whom on the day of the battle he sent the most pressing entreaties to hasten his march: Marshal Soult quitted Salamanca on the 29th: Marshal Beresford very properly declined to commit the young Portuguese army by a forward movement: the few troops to defend the pass were not able for a moment to oppose him, <sup>31st July</sup> and his entry into Plasencia was notified at Talavera on the 2d August. It was instantly arranged between the commanders of the Allies,

CHAP.

VII.

1809.

that the British army should march and attack the approaching force, reported to be about 20,000 men; whilst the Spaniards should remain to watch the line of the Tagus and protect the removal of the wounded, deemed the easier part, as Joseph's discomfited army, dreading a forward movement of the allies, had no other views than forming a junction with the forces from the north by the road of Escalona. The British marched on the morning of the 3d twenty-four miles to Oropesa, and the same evening Sir Arthur received two couriers; the one to acquaint him that Soult had pushed on to Naval Moral, cutting off the communication between Oropesa and the bridge at Almaraz; the other from General Cuesta, stating that as the enemy appeared in force moving upon his flanks, and he had undoubted intelligence that the corps of Marshals Ney and Mortier were united under Marshal Soult, swelling the approaching force from the north to more than 30,000 men, he had decided to retire from Talavera and unite the two armies. This movement, which he executed the same night, leaving 1500 wounded English in the town, rendered the situation of the allied armies highly critical, as Marshal Soult's corps interposed between them and their best line of retreat, whilst another powerful army menaced their flank by Talavera, and should the French commanders have the pru-



dence to combine their movements, an overwhelming superiority of force would soon be brought against them whilst in a situation with but one point of retreat open. The only resource left was to cross the Tagus by the bridge of Arzobispo, which was effected on the night of the 4th by the two armies with all their artillery, and the next day they made a forced march of twenty-four miles to the neighbourhood of Valdela Casa, through a country scarcely practicable for carriages. The extreme heat of the weather, insufficient nourishment, and the difficulties of the road, caused sufferings to the troops almost insupportable; they however persevered, and at the end of the second day's exertion reached the river Ibor, twelve miles further, the steep ascent from which was generally considered in the country an impassable barrier to artillery, but the draft animals of three or four guns being united with the manual labour of a battalion, every impediment was overcome, and each successively forced up. The Spaniards were so struck with the difficulties which presented themselves, that they left all their field train at the bottom through hopeless despondency, till after much entreaty from Lord Wellington they followed his example, and by dint of labour, on the second day, every carriage that accompanied the armies was passed over the mountain.

CHAP.

VII.

1809.

Allies retire  
across the  
Tagus.

6th Aug.

9th

10th

## CHAP.

## VII.

1809.

Marshal Victor entered Talavera on the 7th; and as soon as it was ascertained that the combined armies had retired across the Tagus, Joseph with the reserve went to Aranjuez, and Marshal Ney with his corps returned to the north. Marshal Mortier's corps marched on Arzobispo, and Marshal Soult's corps on Almaraz to cross the Tagus and harass the retiring force, the road from that point to Deleytosa being much shorter than the line of march of the allies; but the Spanish corps that retreated from the passes of Bejar and Baños having destroyed the bridge, and Lord Wellington having taken the precaution to send the division of General Crauford to take post on the left bank, Marshal Soult was unable to force the passage, and the British reached Jaraicejo, where they halted, without any molestation from the enemy; but a strong rear-guard left by the Spaniards at the bridge of Arzobispo was, on the 8th, surprised and completely cut up, with the loss of forty pieces of artillery, by a division of French cavalry which at noon forded the river, unobserved about two miles higher up the stream.

Want of  
food.

The line of march of the two armies during this retreat being nearly united added to the difficulty of procuring supplies; five days passed without an issue of bread, and distress and dissatisfaction daily augmented. That acrimony so constantly excited by separate interests under

adverse fortune came into full play; each army taxed the other with appropriating to itself more than a just proportion of food, and the bond of friendship could with difficulty sustain itself under feelings of irritation sharpened by the pressure of want.

CHAP.  
VII.  
1809.

On the arrival of the army at Deleytosa, General Cuesta resigned his command. That officer in his younger days had given proofs of talent and enterprise; but fifty-five years of honourable service had rendered him incapable of that bodily and mental exertion which the command of a large army requires, and infirmities had soured a temper naturally uncomplaining. With the most upright intentions, mistaking obstinacy for firmness, pettishness for dignity, and procrastination for prudence, all the evils inseparable from a combined operation were aggravated, and the little success of the campaign must in a great measure be attributed to his unfitness for the post he filled. It however merits consideration, whether much of the privation the armies endured was not an inevitable consequence of carrying on operations in a friendly country with insufficient funds, and whether the utmost cordiality on the part of the Spanish general could have materially diminished them. No exertion of authority can induce a voluntary sacrifice of private stores; and where personal freedom and the rights of property are respected,

12th Aug.

CHAP. must not a friendly army without money incur  
VII. nearly the same risk of suffering from want  
1809. amidst the greatest abundance as in a desert?

Operations  
of Sir R.  
Wilson.

Sir Robert Wilson, in the execution of his orders previously to the action at Talavera, pushed on to Naval-Carnero, within twelve miles of Madrid; and, having entered into communication with the inhabitants, raised such a ferment, that two French regiments composing the garrison shut themselves up in the Retiro for security, and his entry into the capital was only prevented by an order on the 27th to join the main army, in anticipation of the approaching battle. On countermarching, finding his junction impeded by the intervention of the French, he entered a wood in their rear, where he remained during the combat. When, by the unexpected movement of Cuesta from Talavera, he afterwards found himself in a similar manner cut off from the line of the Tagus, he moved rapidly to his right, crossed the Tietar, and scrambling over the Sierra de Llana gained the pass of Baños. He had scarcely arrived there, on the 12th August, when the whole corps of Marshal Ney was discovered moving by the same road from Plasencia on its return to Leon. To continue to retire in face of so superior an enemy was to risk the utter destruction of his force; Sir Robert therefore decided to attempt the defence of

CHAP.

VII.

1809.

tional character: even the rank and talents of Marquis Wellesley, sent as ambassador to Seville,\* failed to effect it; nor could his lordship induce any beneficial change in their military system on which reliance could be placed. The chief attention of the Junta was thought to be directed to the preservation of its own power, and the members were charged with carrying their feelings on that point to such culpable excess as even in the distribution of their forces to be more governed by local interests and jealousy of the different commanders than by the demands of the service. This belief raised the indignation of every disinterested Spaniard, but more particularly of the Marquis de la Romana, who having been for some time absent from Spain was free from party prejudices.—Called from his army in Galicia to assist in the councils of the state, and nominated one of a commission to take into consideration the future conduct of affairs, he availed himself of the occasion to publish a manifesto against the Junta. In this paper he questioned the legality of their rule, upbraided them with incapacity and imbecility, and demanded the formation of a Council of Regency, or a deputation of the realm, till the Cortes could be assembled; the speedy meeting of which body he declared to be of vital im-

4th Oct.

• Landed at Cadiz 1st August.

great disorder, and success became doubtful, till a division in reserve advanced between the deploying columns, successfully charged and broke through the Spanish line, when the whole right fell into the utmost disorder and the cavalry galloped to the rear. The left wing, though scarcely attacked, seeing the flight of their comrades, also disbanded and were pursued across the plain to Guardia, losing all their artillery, ammunition waggons and baggage, and above 15,000 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners.

CHAP.  
VII.  
1809.

At the period of this great disaster, it became known that Buonaparte, having concluded the war with Austria by a treaty highly to his advantage, had directed the march of numerous reinforcements to his armies in Spain.

The Spanish government, conscious of the wretched state to which their own military establishments were reduced, became justly alarmed at this intelligence, and used every argument to induce Lord Wellington again to move forward. Their representations were met with fairness, and offers of co-operation made on the most disinterested terms; being either to intrust the supreme command of an auxiliary corps to Lord Wellington, or to enter into arrangements to render the co-operating armies efficient. Every attempt, however, to prevail on the Spanish government to concede the first point was strenuously resisted as a degradation to the na-

portance. Such a manifesto, circulated by a military commander, was nothing short of rebellion; and it proves the extreme weakness of the government to have borne with it, unless the merit be due to them of overlooking personal censure, rather than commence a struggle which might be productive of general anarchy. Romana was certainly actuated by conscientious motives, for being urged by many of his friends to enforce his arguments with the bayonet, he steadily refused, and left the Junta to frame their own decrees respecting the Cortes.

CHAP.  
VII.  
1809.

That representative assembly, known in Spain under different titles from the period of the Gothic kings, varied in its composition and forms of election at the will of the sovereign. In the eleventh century it was composed of bishops and nobles only: in the twelfth century, the Castilian towns were first admitted to send deputies: in the fourteenth century, the nobility and clergy being almost entirely excluded, the privilege of election was extended to ninety principal places; but by successive encroachments of the executive, it was limited in the fifteenth century to eighteen or nineteen towns or cities, beyond which number it never again extended. At the period when the deputies were most numerous, the ballot was open to all householders; but when limited to eighteen, it was confined to the corporations; and, in many

Observa-  
tions on the  
Cortes.

CHAP.  
VII.

1809.

cases, the sovereign named the deputies they should appoint, or purchased their votes when elected, and the nobles and clergy were altogether excluded from having seats.\* The duties of the Cortes were equally undefined, and their influence varied according to the character of the reigning monarch. They, however, always asserted the sole right of levying money, confirmed to them by a solemn agreement with the sovereign in 1465, and even frequently demanded an account of its appropriation. The privilege of framing or annulling laws, although occasionally encroached upon by edicts of the sovereign, also rested with them, till Charles V. (rendered in some degree independent by the support of his other dominions and the sums drawn from the new world) openly trampled on their authority, and treated their remonstrances with silent neglect, claiming for his decrees the force of laws. Philip II. carried arbitrary legislative enactments into a system, and first imposed taxes on the people without the consent of their representatives. The Cortes being thus shorn of their power, his successors rendered their meetings less frequent, and finally put an end to their sittings without a struggle; since which time, through a period of ninety

\* See Teoria de las Cortes por el Canonico Don Francisco Martinez Marina, and Robertson's History of Charles V.



years, their very name had been gradually sinking into oblivion with the Spaniards. In the most quiet period, to have revived this representative body would have been a work of difficulty, requiring the utmost caution; the privileges of the different orders and the interests of every individual being concerned in the decision. The effect the Cortes might have on the national spirit, when assembled, was doubtful; but their numbers could not fail to create additional delay and complexity in the operations of the executive. It is not therefore surprising, that the Junta hesitated to embarrass themselves with such a meeting; and that, when, obliged by the pressing remonstrances of Marquis Wellesley and the threatenings of Romana to take some steps, they did at length issue a decree for calling the Cortes together, they procrastinated the time of their entering on business to the 1st of March of the following year.

CHAP.  
VII.  
1809.

28th Oct.

Lord Wellington had every personal motive to render him desirous of moving forward, but political considerations forbade his doing so, without the most certain guarantee of efficient co-operation. The British government finding it impracticable to obtain sufficient specie, on any terms, to carry on the contest on a grand scale in the Peninsula,\* where every thing was of

\* This requires explanation, as the same want might be expected to have prevented the French acting in force. A general

CHAP. an excessive price, and, being the property of  
 VII. allies, was paid for in money, had caused the  
 1809. main effort of the war to be transferred, during  
 the summer, to an enemy's country, abundant

belief prevailed at the commencement of the struggle that large armies could not find subsistence in Spain; and a saying of Henry the Fourth of France was brought forward in support of it.—“*Quand on y va fort, on meurt de faim; quand on y va faible, on est battu*.”—that is true, as applied to the country bordering the Pyrenees, the part most known to Henry; also to particular districts of Portugal, and to some mountainous provinces; but Castile is probably one of the finest corn countries in the world: its surplus admits of the cultivation of the vine throughout the southern provinces without any importation. The French, therefore, whose practice it is to live at the expense of the inhabitants of the country wherever their armies may act, and on food furnished by requisition of the magistrates of the several districts on the inhabitants generally, found neither difficulty nor deficiency; the burthen was equally shared amongst the cultivators, or if otherwise, the blame was imputed to their own magistrates: whereas the English professing to pay for everything, and employing their own contractors, were dependant on the exertions of individuals, and were frequently defrauded by them as well as by the avarice of the proprietors, and always paid according to the scarcity of the article on the spot. Wherever corn or forage was found it was taken: thus some proprietors furnished their all; others furnished nothing; and when, as was frequently the case, the army being without money, articles were taken on receipt, it was considered robbery, and certainly had to the individuals all the inconvenience of such a proceeding:—and it may be doubted whether the English, professing to pay for everything, or the French taking everything by requisition, created most ill-will.

and cheap, where the troops could also be partly supplied from the produce of England. An enterprize in favour of Austria, then contending with Buonaparte on equal terms, was prepared on a scale worthy of the object and of the nation; all the disposable troops were drawn from every part of the United Kingdom, and at the end of July a superb army, exceeding 40,000 men, was unexpectedly placed in a situation to penetrate into the finest provinces of the French empire, the inhabitants of which were discontented and totally without a regular force. Three weeks, however, having been consumed in the reduction of Flushing and in subsequent arrangements, it was decided in a military council, that the favourable period for landing on the continent had passed, and that nothing further should be undertaken. Previously to this resolve, the unhealthy season had set in with its accustomed virulence—hundreds daily sickened under its influence; and ultimately more than half of the troops perished, or were rendered inefficient by lingering diseases, generated in the pestilential marshes of the island of Zealand.

After this severe loss England had no disposable force except the small body of men in Spain. Should, therefore, a repetition of the circumstances experienced in the last combined movement occur, and render the British army

CHAP.  
VII.  
1809.

CHAP.  
VII.

1809.

inefficient from privation, or cause it to be sacrificed in unequal combat with the enemy, the chief support of the Peninsula would be lost. In the last few months the whole prospect of affairs had clouded over, and a struggle far more arduous than at any preceding period approached. The Spanish armies having proved themselves unable to act in the field, even under the late most favourable circumstances, nothing could be hoped from their co-operation in their actual state of weakness and disorganization, and the only chance of successful resistance appeared to be in protracting the contest and widening the field of operations. It was now haughtily announced by the enemy that their principal operations would be against Portugal, the government of which relied entirely on the British commander for support, and submitted with cheerfulness to all his wishes. That country also, from its great strength and scanty produce, was favourable for defensive war: it was therefore more consonant with justice and sound policy to undertake her defence, than to risk every thing on the uncertain issue of active hostilities in the south of Spain. Actuated by these considerations, Lord Wellington, on the 8th December, regardless of the remonstrances of the Junta, released his army from inactivity on the unhealthy banks of the Guadiana, where

British  
march into  
Beira.

9000 men\* still crowded the hospitals, and moved it to the frontiers of Beira, which a recent defeat of the Spaniards had laid open to the incursions of the enemy, whose force in that quarter was daily augmenting.

CHAP.  
VII.  
1809.

The army of La Romana, under the Duke del Parque, on the march of Marshals Soult and Ney to Plasencia, took possession of Salamanca, and on the return of the first division, ascertaining their numbers to be small, engaged them at Tomames, on the 18th October, with such complete success as to oblige the French to retire behind the Douro.

Action at  
Tomames.


At the end of the following month, the reinforcements which entered from France enabled General Kellermann to assemble 15,000 men, with which he attacked the Duke del Parque near Alba de Tormes. The troops, who had on all previous occasions behaved with character, instantly broke on being charged by the French cavalry, and individually dispersed; not the smallest appearance of a collected body remaining to demand a second effort. The serious ill effects to have been apprehended from this dis-

Action at  
Alba de  
Tormes.

28th Nov.

\* Official Return of Sick, exclusive of Artillery and Engineers:

|                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 25th Nov. 1809 . . . | 8,880 rank and file. |
| 25th Dec. — . . .    | 8,782                |
| 8th Feb. 1810 . . .  | 7,604                |
| 21st Feb. — . . .    | 4,900                |

CHAP. VII.  1809. aster were happily averted by the opportune arrival of the British, who, at the close of the year, entered into cantonments behind the Coa, and under their protection the fugitives again collected.

Lord Wellington named Marshal General in Portugal.

23d Nov.

Lord Wellington, a little previously to this period, had been named Marshal General of the Lusitanian forces,\* an appointment which giving supreme authority in military affairs, even to the extent of life and death, is never conferred on any one except in a crisis of national danger in the absence of the sovereign or during a minority. By a royal decree, the Regency were commanded to invite the Marshal General to all their sittings, on important considerations, whether military or financial,—and if inconvenient to him to attend, to submit their deliberations in writing for his opinion. His lordship embraced the opportunity, whilst moving his headquarters from Badajos to Vizeu, to make the detour of Lisbon and concert the necessary measures for the defence of the country, and also to decide on the construction of works both to guard the approaches to the capital and to assure the embarkation of his army in the event of its being overpowered.

Defence of Gerona.

Gerona surrendered on the 10th December, after a memorable defence of six months, which places the name of the Governor, Don Marian.

\* By a Royal Decree, dated Rio Janiero, July 6th, 1809, published at Lisbon November 23d.

CHAP.

VII.

1809.

Alvarez, on a level with that of Palafox, and obtained for the citizens the same honorary distinctions as those granted to the Zaragossans. The town stands low, at the confluence of the Ona and Ter rivers, which cover the northern side, and on the opposite quarter, on a height 550 yards from the place, stands a square fort of 200 feet exterior side, called Montjuic. This petty work was first attacked—the total force under Alvarez not amounting to 5,000 men, whilst the besiegers, under General St. Cyr, rather exceeded 20,000. Ground was broken on the 7th of May; soon afterwards sixty pieces of heavy ordnance opened, and having fired against the fort incessantly for twenty-two days, besides effecting an enormous breach, levelled all the upper works. The French then offered terms, which being rejected, they made a general assault, 4th July. and were repulsed with loss. During the three succeeding days the besiegers' batteries thundered without intermission, and on the fourth morning they again tried the force of arms. Several heavy columns advanced to the breach, and persisted in their attempts to ascend it with so much courage and obstinacy, that success was long balanced, and on their repulse, 1600 killed and wounded remained in the ditch. After this effort, the French, finding all open attacks useless, resorted to the sap and the mine, and an entire month passed in the dispute of a ravelin, 8th July.

**CHAP.** which (after several attempts to form a lodg-  
**VII.** ment in it had failed) remained by tacit agree-  
 1809. ment unoccupied by either party, and all per-  
 sonal conflict ceased. The fire of artillery and  
 the mine however gradually levelled the walls,  
 and blew up the very interior of the place,  
 when, there being no longer anything worth  
 disputing at Montjuic, the garrison withdrew on  
 the 11th of August.

In the defence of the town the same firmness  
 continued to be displayed. By a multiplicity  
 of artillery, the weak enceinte was quickly  
 beaten down to a frightful extent, and the be-  
 siegers, after a succession of desperate combats,  
 had established themselves close to the ruins;  
 the garrison, exhausted by their great efforts  
 and scanty diet, were reduced to the utmost ex-  
 tremity, and their fall seemed inevitable. At  
 this critical period, General Blake, by a demon-  
 stration of attacking the besiegers, having in-  
 duced them to concentrate their forces on one  
 30th Aug. side of the town, 3000 men, with a supply of  
 provisions, entered at the opposite extremity  
 over the river; where the French posts were  
 left too weak to make much resistance. The  
 Spaniards also interrupted the communication  
 with Barcelona so incessantly, that little of the  
 harvest could be introduced, and it became ne-  
 cessary for the French to attempt to replenish  
 the public stores by means of a squadron from  
 25th Oct. Toulon, which the activity and seamanship of



Lord Collingwood enabled him to intercept and drive on shore on the coast of Provence. CHAP.  
VII.

The slow progress of the attack induced Buonaparte in August to recal General St. Cyr, and to bestow the command on Marshal Augereau. 1809.  
That officer redoubled the quantity of fire, till the garrison were apparently without the slightest power of resistance, when he directed a general assault, in which he persisted till the troops, despairing of success, would no longer exert themselves. The number of the assailants that fell in this struggle was so considerable that Augereau feared to renew the attempt, but confining himself to a fire from his batteries waited the effects of time and of an epidemic sickness which broke out amongst the defenders. In the meanwhile working parties were incessantly employed to break up the roads, and to create obstacles to the approach of any relief; notwithstanding which, General O'Donnel on the side of Bispal deceived the vigilance of the guard, and threw in a partial supply, which enabled the garrison to subsist till the 10th December, when both provisions and ammunition being exhausted, the wretched remains of the defenders, about 4,000 in number, were, in the eyes of the French, sufficiently formidable to be granted a capitulation, after the breaches had remained ten weeks open. App. 9.

The Supreme Junta were now pressed on

CHAP.

VII.

1809.

Unpopularity of the Junta.

every side: all the misfortunes of the war were attributed to their misrule, and remonstrances poured in from every commander. Instead, however, of yielding to the popular voice, and calling to their assistance officers who enjoyed the public confidence, they contented themselves with the show of establishing a responsible body by selecting a committee of their own members for military affairs; but as they collectively retained a controlling power over their resolves, this subdivision only added complexity to imbecility. Their measures were thenceforward attacked in a hundred ways; libels were industriously circulated in Seville, and the local Junta almost openly set their authority at defiance. In this state of things, a conspiracy for a change of government being discovered, it was regarded as rebellion; further restrictions were in consequence laid on the press, and they did not hesitate to employ the guardians of religion with their secret tribunals to interrogate or punish with death several citizens who had the courage to disseminate their opinions on the means of promoting the public welfare. In this sad struggle for existence, wherein the Junta, forfeiting all claim to patriotism or liberal views, became an object of just reprobation, the credit is still due to them of maintaining their usual elevated style in addressing the people, and of rising in energy in their military arrangements with the danger that menaced the state. At the end of

the year, when the continental peace became assured, and the French having received great reinforcements prepared to invade Andalusia, the defence of which rested altogether with the Spaniards, a decree worthy of the crisis appeared, which, prefaced by an animating exhortation reminding the people that valour and perseverance must ultimately rise superior to tactics and numbers, commanded that the church plate should be coined into money, that the taxes should be doubled, the army augmented, and every thing disposable collected on the northern frontier to render it an impregnable barrier.

CHAP.  
VII.  
1809.  
20th Dec.

Unhappily intestine divisions and jealousies had so matured under adversity, that no officer of reputation could be selected to invest with the chief command. The Duke of Albuquerque, whom public opinion designated as the most able, was an object of the greatest suspicion and distrust to the Junta; General Castaños was in disgrace at Algeiras; La Romana positively refused to serve under their orders; and the Condé de Noronha had gone one step further, and had actually displayed the standard of rebellion in Galicia. In consequence of these schisms the supreme command in Andalusia was entrusted to General Ariezaga; one independent corps only of 12,000 men being assembled on the Guadiana, under the Duke of Albuquerque, to cover Estramadura and act on the flank of the invaders.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*The French pass the Sierra Morena and overrun every part of the Southern Provinces except the Island of Leon—Dissolution of the Supreme Junta—a Regency appointed—Occurrences in Andalusia and Granada—Proceedings of the Regency and of the Intrusive Government—Preparations to expel the British from the Peninsula—General Junot reduces Astorga—General Bonnet occupies St. Ander and the Asturias—Military Operations in the Eastern Provinces—Public Feeling in England—Decision to defend Portugal.*

CHAP. **B**EFORE the decrees mentioned in the preceding  
 VIII. chapter could be carried into effect, the intrusive  
 1810. king took advantage of his success at Ocaña, and of the employment found for the British in Portugal, to make an effort to extend his authority over the provinces of the south, and, under his own personal superintendence, confided the execution to Marshal Soult with an army of 55,000 men. The Spaniards, prone to despise an enemy whilst ever so little distant, knowing that the whole range of the Sierra Morena or chain of mountains which covers the entrance of Andalusia from the north had been fortified with much care and labour, and that 30,000 men had been collected for its defence, felt no apprehension for the event. They, however, had

quickly cause to repent of their confidence: CHAP. VIII.  
 Soult made his attack on the 20th January in three principal columns—the right, under Marshal Victor, by Almaden—the centre, under Marshal Mortier, by the high road, and the left, under General Sebastiana, by Villa-nueva de los Infantes, and, after a slight resistance, dislodged the defenders with little loss to himself. 1810.

French, pass  
 the Morena,  
 20th Jan.

The chief care of General Ariezaga was to maintain the mountain pass of Despeña Perros on the main road from Madrid, always vaunted as impregnable, and lately strengthened by the addition of numerous batteries and defensive mines; he there posted his best troops and for some time held Mortier's corps in check till a belief spread that the Puerto del Rey on its left was forced; that apprehension shook the resolution of the defenders; they began to retire, and the assailants vigorously pushing forward penetrated almost without resistance through the retrenchments, making 5 or 6000 prisoners, and advancing by Carolina, Andujar and Cordova, whilst Victor swept round on the same points from Almaden, the two corps united before Seville on the 29th. That place, reposing in all the apathy of presumptuous confidence, was unprepared for defence, and after two days negotiation, opened its gates on a written assurance of favourable treatment. The victors took possession of 200 pieces of serviceable

reduce  
 Seville,

1st Feb.

CHAP. cannon with magazines and supplies of incalculable value; also of a foundry and powder manufactory uninjured, no preparation having been made to meet such a reverse. Jaen, although fortified and armed, opened her gates on the approach of the left column, and General Sebastiani immediately pushing on came up with the main body of Ariezaga's army at Alcala-real, near Granada, on the 28th January, dispersed it afresh, and the same day entered the city without opposition. A feeble attempt at resistance to the same officer in front of Malaga, on the 5th February, was attended with similar results. The French cavalry charged into the streets with the fugitives, and were for a moment checked by a fire from the houses; but resistance ceased on the arrival of the infantry, and the town, with its immense magazines, abundant artillery, and supplies of every description, fell to the conquerors without a stipulation in behalf of the inhabitants.

Such slight opposition led the French to believe that the inhabitants of the southern provinces were tired of the war, and both Marshal Soult and General Sebastiani confidently expressed that opinion in their official despatches to Paris, declaring that the king was every where received with enthusiastic joy, the whole population being desirous of submitting to his authority, and that the Supreme Junta only

waited an opportunity to capitulate at Cadiz, when the war would be at an end. Joseph Buonaparte was so impressed with such a belief, that he published an order for the erection of a third pillar of Hercules "to convey to the most distant posterity and to the navigators of both worlds the names of the chiefs who had conquered Spain." Indeed the passage of the Sierra Morena was effected so much more quickly than had been judged possible, that it was imputed to treachery in the chiefs or the extreme of cowardice in the troops defending the passes. It was generally supposed that the inaccessible precipices and strong defences behind which the battalions were posted would, like the walls of a town, more than compensate the inferiority of their discipline; and enable them to rival in obstinacy the defenders of Zaragossa and Gerona. A little consideration, however, will show that their situation was far less favourable. Along an extensive mountainous district there are innumerable ascents practicable to infantry, and whilst a show of large bodies is made on the fortified roads, the flanks are turned by other troops, the combat falls where least expected, and the advantage of situation ends generally with the assailants. From the instances recorded in the highly instructive narrative of Xenophon to the present example, such has invariably been the fate of inferior or ill-disciplined troops at-

CHAP.  
VIII.  
1810.  
2d Feb.

CHAP. tempting to defend a mountainous barrier against  
 VIII. a manœuvring force, and a dispassionate judg-  
 1810. ment will acquit the Spaniards of greater mis-  
 conduct on the Sierra Morena than elsewhere.

The government, however, acted as if they had really believed the passage of the mountains impracticable, and left Cadiz so totally unprovided for defence that it would most probably have fallen into the power of the French equally with Seville and Granada, had they used that degree of enterprise and activity which the occasion demanded. Instead, however, of rapidly pushing forward and directing their undivided means to secure the main object before their opponents could recover from the confusion and distrust created by unexpected defeat, it was not till two days after the fall of Seville that a force (Marshal Victor's corps) marched on Cadiz, thirteen thousand men under Marshal Mortier being at the same time detached in the opposite direction to summons Badajos. The Duke of Albuquerque, on the contrary, immediately on hearing of the passage of the Morena by the French, acting on his own responsibility and in direct contradiction to his orders, which were to protect Estramadura, marched with 8000 men of his division from Pedrosa de la Sierra, on the right bank of the Guadalquiver, by Carmona and Lebrija, a distance of 250 miles, in nine days, and threw himself into the Isla de Leon on the

3d Feb.

24th Jan.



4th February in time to barricade the bridge of Zuazo against the advanced guard of Marshal Victor, which presented themselves for admittance on the following morning. Marshal Mortier also found the gates of Badajos shut, and after some fruitless negotiation, being without means to undertake the siege, withdrew to Merida.

CHAP.  
VIII.  
1810.  
5th Feb.

On the entry of the French into Andalusia, the utmost apprehension and insubordination had prevailed in Cadiz from distrust of the Governor, General Vanegas; but he, on the first symptom of insurrection, having prudently resigned his authority, a Junta of eighteen persons was elected by public ballot from amongst the householders, which popular assembly, by the force of opinion, restored confidence and influenced the citizens to work night and day in strengthening the fortifications. The Duke of Albuquerque immediately on his arrival was named by the Junta commander in chief, and zealously co-operating together, they completed such arrangements for external defence before the French main body came up, that they were unable to force an entry into the island, and all possibility of injury to the city by bombardment was averted, except from a tongue of land on the eastern side of the harbour, at a distance exceeding 5000 yards, and occupied by Fort Matagorda. Almost simultaneously with the

10th Feb.

7th Feb.

CHAP. investment, a British brigade arrived to the sup-  
 VIII. port of the garrison from Gibraltar, followed by  
 1810. a second from Lisbon, when all apprehensions of  
 11th Feb. immediate danger subsided.

On the 16th of February, Joseph, from the head-quarters of the army before Cadiz, acting under the impression before described, addressed a second mild and conciliatory letter to the Junta, pressing them to avert the fatal consequences that must attend a siege, and to seal the tranquillity and happiness of Spain by a reconciliation with their sovereign; but however well founded his expectations of their compliance might have been originally, a fortnight of inactivity had operated such a complete change of feeling and circumstances that the flag of truce was instantly sent back with the laconic reply, that "the city of Cadiz, faithful to its principles, acknowledges no other King than Ferdinand the Seventh."

Dissolution  
 of the Su-  
 preme  
 Junta.

The Supreme Central Junta finished its unfortunate rule in a popular tumult at Seville on the approach of the French. The members separately fled to Cadiz, where three and twenty of them united on the 29th of January and attempted to resume their authority; but neither the Local Junta, the army, nor the populace would obey their decrees; upon which, in a dignified address to their countrymen, they made a solemn resignation of their authority, appointing a council of regency of five persons to carry on.

A Regency  
 formed.

the government till the Cortes should be assembled.\* On the dissolution of the Junta, the individuals who had composed it were treated as criminals; the most obnoxious to the ruling influence were imprisoned and the remainder banished without distinction of character or conduct.

CHAP.  
VIII.  
1810.

As the acts of the subsequent governments were in no respect more energetic than those of the Supreme Junta, the justice of such treatment may be questioned. The members, suddenly called to the direction of affairs, had no example to guide them, no routine to follow, but a disorganized machine to set in movement and regulate under the most complicated difficulties. This they stated in vindication of their conduct in different appeals to the nation, which, while drawn up with moderation and candour, appear in the original manly and dignified, and cannot be read without sympathy. The following few passages are selected to show the nature of their apologies: "When the government of the country was committed to our charge, our armies, half-organized, were destitute of every thing. Our treasury was empty, our resources

\* The members were Don Pedro de Quevedo y Quintana, the Bishop of Orense, Don Antonio de Escano, General Castaños, and Don Fernandez Leon; the latter was subsequently changed for Don Miguel de Lardizabal.

CHAP. distant and uncertain: before we had time to  
VIII. act, the despot of France poured through the  
Pyrenees the most formidable military force ever  
1810. known; his veteran legions, better provided  
and far the most numerous, surrounded our dis-  
jointed armies, and in a moment Spain lost half  
her defenders. The re-organization of those  
forces and the creation of other armies have  
absorbed all the resources since then at our  
command. Wherever our authority extended,  
there have perfect liberty and justice prevailed;  
and even throughout the provinces occupied by  
the enemy, we have endeavoured, through many  
secret channels, to keep alive the fire of pa-  
triotism. We have upheld the national honour  
in the most delicate negotiations, always man-  
fully bearing up against adversity, ever trusting  
that we should overcome it by our constancy.  
It is true that we have committed many errors,  
and we would, were it possible, redeem them  
with our blood; but in the various difficulties  
which encompassed us, who could have always  
acted right? Can it with justice be imputed to  
us that one general possessed little prudence;  
and that another was deserted by fortune; that  
one army wanted courage and another confi-  
dence? Much, O Spaniards! is to be attributed  
to your inexperience, and much to circum-  
stances."

It has already been observed that the Central Junta, from its composition and the previous habits of its members, was altogether unfit to direct the affairs of a nation. They, however, were Spaniards, who never distrust their own powers, and they clung to the chief authority long after the nation had discovered their inability to wield it. This weakness, with the procrastination general in their countrymen, was their grand fault; and on dispassionately regarding the acts of their administration, even at this short distance of time, more seem worthy of praise than of censure, and few indeed can be suspected of criminality.

CHAP.  
VIII.  
1810.

The violent dissolution of the Junta, and the illegality of their transferring the sovereign authority to a regency named by themselves, although little controverted in Spain, where four-fifths of the population, being under the dominion of the French, were not affected by it, deserve notice, as being the plea on which the South-American colonies justified their first steps towards independence. It would, however, appear that the seeds of separation had been long germinating, and only required a favourable moment to spring up, as almost immediately after intelligence of the dissolution of the Junta reached the eastern provinces they pledged themselves not to acknowledge any provisional government that might succeed in Spain, and

CHAP. formed an independent Junta in the name of  
 VIII. King Ferdinand.\*

1810. To return from this digression to the military  
 April. narrative. For some months after the invaders occupied the chief cities of Andalusia and Granada, the guerilla warfare was directed against them with activity and success by bands sheltered in the Sierra Morena, Sierra de Ronda, and the Alpujarras mountains. Gibraltar supplied the patriots with arms and ammunition, and became a depot for their prisoners, and an occasional point of support to their operations: at the same time, a considerable portion of the French army was prevented acting against them by the necessity of unceasingly guarding the outlets from the island of Leon, where, independent of 6 or 7,000 auxiliary Portuguese and British troops, the Spaniards had assembled an army of 15,000 men.

Description  
 of Cadiz.

The island of Leon is of some extent, and for the sake of illustration may be called of a triangular form, two sides being washed by the harbour or the ocean, and consequently secure from the attacks of a land force. The third side, about eight miles in length, is merely separated from the continent by a channel from 80 to 150 yards in width, called the San Pedro river. Over this

\* See their declaration of independence dated at San Miguel del Tucuman, 9th July, 1816.

stream, which is never fordable, the only communication to the country connects with a causeway artificially formed through a broad and swampy marsh, which everywhere bounds the river frontier of the island. At the apex of the triangle, or point farthest removed from the continent, a low narrow tongue of land, in many parts not exceeding two hundred yards in width, stretches four miles and a half into the ocean, at the extremity of which stands the town of Cadiz strongly fortified, and presenting to the attack of an enemy only one front of fortification, occupying the breadth of the isthmus.

CHAP.  
VIII.  
1810.

The first operation of Marshal Soult was to confine the Spaniards to the island of Leon by the reduction of Fort Matagorda, a small work, which having been injudiciously dismantled on the first alarm, was, soon after his artillery opened, rendered untenable. The garrison, under Captain Maclean, remained firm in defence of the ruins till withdrawn, which was accomplished on the 23d of April by the boats of the squadron with little loss, under the fire of the besieger's batteries.

About a month previously to this event, Lieut. 25th Mar. General Sir Thomas Graham had arrived from England to command the auxiliary forces in the island, and had almost immediately commenced a line of defensive works behind the river San Pedro, occupying the Caraccas as an advanced

CHAP. post on the left, and extending to the ocean on  
 VIII. the right. These works, executed with great

1810.

labour and ability, soon rendered the river frontier of the island almost unattackable, and the French on their side spared no endeavour to secure their cantonments; they fortified with care Puerto Real, Puerto St. Maria, and Chiclana, forming entrenched camps in the intermediate spaces; but, above all, they strengthened the point of Trocadero, where they established batteries, which at long and uncertain ranges occasionally threw shells into the town. The two parties thus mutually regarded each other with distrust. The garrison were satisfied with defensive exertions, and the French could not possibly undertake any offensive measures against a place so well secured; Marshal Soult, in consequence, confined his operations to sending out moveable columns, which swept continually through the mountains, frequently suffering severely, but gradually putting down all opposition, and riveting the French dominion over the provinces of the South. The occurrences of most importance during the spring were; that

23d April.

in April General Sebastiani, after a sharp affair with the army of Murcia, entered the capital of that province; and in the middle of the fol-

15th May.

lowing month, the French prisoners afloat in Cadiz harbour having cut the cables of their prison ships during a gale of wind, three of



them drove on shore on the eastern side of the bay, by which means 2,000 men escaped and joined the blockading force.

CHAP.  
VIII.  
1810.

The Spaniards were paralysed by want of independence and energy in their government, as the Regents, shut up in Cadiz, were the mere creatures of the local Junta, and subject to have all their patriotic intentions frustrated by petty and interested views. A sad proof of this may be traced in their conduct towards the American colonists, whom wisely meditating to treat as equals engaged in the same loyal cause with themselves, they issued a decree highly favourable to their commercial interests; but shortly afterwards, at the instigation of the merchants, who were alarmed at the idea of competition in trade, they had the disgraceful weakness to pronounce their own act a forgery, and subsequently, on intelligence of the movements of the Americans to establish an independent Junta of government, swayed by the same baneful interest, they passed further restrictive laws, and by orders for the employment of force drove the colonists into open rebellion.

17th May.

Indeed, Spain gained in no respect by the change of rulers, as the Regency, with all the imbecility of the Junta, exceeded them in the desire to preserve their authority, and permitted so many trifling difficulties to have weight in regulating the forms of election of the deputies

Conduct of  
the Re-  
gency.

CHAP. to the Cortes, that the spring passed away with-  
 VIII. out any decision, as would most probably suc-  
 1810. ceeding seasons had not the intrusive king sti-  
 mulated them into activity by proclaiming his  
 intention to convoke a similar assembly at Ma-  
 drid. The apprehension of a counter popular  
 government caused all lesser considerations to  
 vanish, and the meeting of the Cortes was finally  
 arranged for the month of September.

Conduct of  
 the French.

No such procrastination injured the cause of  
 the intruders, who, bred under a system where  
 the most momentous changes daily occurred,  
 never admitted discussions about formalities or  
 justice for an instant to thwart their views.  
 Joseph Buonaparte, on his return to Madrid  
 from the conquest of the southern provinces, af-  
 fected to consider the subjugation of the country  
 complete, and acted as if the acknowledged  
 sovereign of Spain. Besides the boon of con-  
 voking the Cortes before alluded to, he pub-  
 lished flattering promises of increased prosperity  
 in every department of the state from his paternal  
 care; renovated naval strength, revived com-  
 merce, improved agriculture, and a thousand  
 other blessings, were held out in dazzling per-  
 spective to his faithful subjects. In the mean-  
 while, the French commanders turned Joseph's  
 pretensions to real account, they issued procla-  
 mations affecting the whole population, en-  
 forcing requisitions of every kind for the service

of the French armies ; and amongst others, for all the best animals in the country, commanding such as were not required for military purposes to be maimed or mutilated. They even so far disregarded the acknowledged rights of an independent people, and forgot the consideration due to valour and patriotism under adversity, as to proclaim, " There is no Spanish army except that of his Majesty King Joseph Napoleon ; all bodies of men, therefore, that exist in the provinces, whatever may be their number and whoever may be their commander, shall be treated as gangs of banditti ; and all individuals of such gangs as shall be taken with arms in their hands shall be immediately shot." In the same proclamation, they had even the injustice to denounce the most severe punishment against the peaceable and unarmed inhabitants of the districts wherever the crime of opposing the French troops by armed parties should be committed. This decree having been carried into execution at various places, the Council of Regency, to counteract its effects, commanded reprisals of three Frenchmen for each Spaniard so executed, with a certain number for each house destroyed or other outrage committed. The guerrilla chiefs gave force to their orders ; one of them in particular hung several Frenchmen on the trees bordering the high road near Madrid, in retaliation for some of his own men who had

CHAP.  
VIII.  
1810.

CHAP.

VIII.

1810.

been similarly executed, vowing to do the same by all superior officers who should fall into his power. On this resolution becoming known, most of the French generals, alarmed at the danger which threatened them individually, disavowed the decree, and the system of extermination happily ceased.

Joseph's  
mildness.

Nevertheless occasional acts of great severity were directed against the inhabitants of those places where the French troops sustained any loss from the guerrillas, and many individuals were arrested and shot on the vague charge of being connected with those bands. It is highly creditable to the character of the puppet bearing the regal title, that these measures were neither approved nor sanctioned by him; mildness and conciliation were the attributes of his government, and the royal authority ever stood opposed to the violence and harshness of the French commanders; they, however, being supported by Napoleon, spurned at all restrictive laws, and some of the marshals, tired with the war and desirous of other employment, created occasions for making themselves personally obnoxious to the court. The Spaniards aware of this, duly appreciated the mild forgiving temper of Joseph Buonaparte, and though his low origin, his want of military character, his indolence and indulgence in the pleasures of the table, caused him to be invariably spoken of with derision and

contempt, he was not, like the military, the object of their detestation or abhorrence. His ministers even flattered themselves at this period that, when the necessity for great military exertion and its consequent exaction should cease, they could, by an equitable administration of the laws, render him popular, and to lessen their dependence on the French, were strenuously exerting their influence to create a national army. With that view all the regular troops made prisoners subsequently to the battle of Ocaña were received as reclaimed subjects, and being made to take the oath of allegiance were well fed and clothed, and formed into battalions.

CHAP.  
VIII.  
1810.

The primary object of both parties, however, was to drive the English off the Peninsula—on that point their common interest cordially united them and suspended their jealousies. The moment for making the decisive attempt appeared to be fast approaching; France triumphant, without another opponent in Europe, was pouring re-inforcements across the Pyrenees to complete all her battalions, to form two additional corps d'armée, and also several unattached divisions to aid the operations of her principal armies; she was also renewing her artillery, remounting her cavalry, replenishing her magazines, and selecting her best officers of every arm for the several commands in the Peninsula. Seven Marshals, twenty-five Generals of Divi-

Prepara-  
tions to con-  
quer Por-  
tugal.

CHAP. sion, and above one hundred Generals of Brigade,  
VIII. at this time borne on the staff of her armies in  
1810. Spain, give an idea of the magnitude of the  
force she contemplated to assemble.

In March, one of the newly formed corps (the 8th), under General Junot, moved from the Ebro into the kingdom of Leon to invest Astorga, and Marshal Ney's corps concentrated on the Agueda to cover that operation; about the same period one of the newly formed divisions occupied St. Ander. The siege of Astorga commenced on the 21st of March, and the defence was resolutely maintained for a month, when after repulsing the assailants at the breach, the garrison, about 4,000 in number, capitulated as prisoners of war. During the attack a force from St. Ander over-run the Asturias, and immediately on its conclusion a detachment from the besieging army reduced the castle of Sanabria, whilst the remainder invested Ciudad Rodrigo; so that at the end of April, on the western frontier of Spain, Galicia and Badajos alone remained free.

The affairs of Catalonia scarcely combine with the general operations of the war. The inhabitants were left almost to their own exertions, and the military events present a painful detail of the fruitless efforts of valour and patriotism opposed to organization and tactics. In order, however, to convey a just idea of the military

situation of Spain at the period of this great effort to crush the British, it becomes necessary to trace the disasters in the eastern provinces to the same date.

CHAP.  
VIII.  
1810.

General Suchet, on whom the chief command of the French forces in Aragon was conferred as a reward for the defeat of the Valencian army at Belchite, attempted to push the tide of success beyond reasonable bounds, and by a bold and unexpected effort intimidate Valencia into submission, communicate with Marshal Soult in Murcia, and subjugate the whole of the eastern provinces. Making long and rapid marches with a corps of 15,000 men, accompanied by light field artillery. only, he unexpectedly appeared before the town on the 5th of March, threatening the citizens with his utmost vengeance should they offer resistance. General Caro, who had at the commencement of the war frustrated a similar attempt of Marshal Moncey, commanded the garrison, which consisted chiefly of those very troops who had fled on the first attack at Belchite; but now feeling confidence in their situation, their native courage fully displayed itself, and they obliged their former conqueror, after the parade of a week, precipitately to retrograde. On his return to the Ebro, General Suchet employed his troops to disperse various small Spanish corps, and to ensure his communications whilst he

Investment  
of Valencia.

CHAP. made preparations for the gradual but certain  
 VIII. subjugation of the eastern provinces, by a sys-  
 1810. tematic reduction of the fortified posts and the  
 fortresses.

Fall of Hos-  
 talrich.

Soon after the surrender of Gerona, the walls of Hostalrich fell an ignoble conquest to Augereau. The blockade commenced early in January, and shortly afterwards a violent bombardment ensued, under which the place was contested with the greatest obstinacy till the 12th of May following, when the brave garrison, having consumed their last day's food, sallied out to cut their way through the blockading corps. A large proportion nobly fell in the attempt, amongst others the heroic Don Juan de Estrada the governor; but many hundreds restored themselves to liberty. About a month previous to this event, O'Donnel made a general movement of the Catalan troops and peasantry to throw in supplies, attacking at the same moment four or five of the enemy's posts.

March 30.

The Miquelets were very successful, cutting off whole detachments, but the regular army being repulsed, the object of the enterprize failed; nevertheless the French had 2 or 3000 men killed or wounded in these several encounters. Marshal Augereau, a little before, had boasted that the Ampurdam was completely subdued, and as proof stated that all found with arms in their hands being considered robbers were hung

April 3d.



on the spot.\* So severe a loss immediately following such a declaration irritated Napoleon so greatly, that Augereau shared the fate of St. Cyr and was replaced by Marshal M'Donald. The islands of Las Medas, forming an important maritime post adjacent to the scene of warfare, were surprised by a detachment of French troops the day after the Spaniards evacuated Hostalrich; and in Upper Catalonia, Tarragona alone remained free.

CHAP.  
VIII.  
1810.

13th May.

The war of sieges carried on by General Suchet in the same quarter shows, that fortresses, equally with troops in the field, must yield to superiority of military science; the only cheering events that attended the efforts of the Spaniards to arrest his career being when he departed from the rules of the art. His first operation was against Lerida: the besieger's batteries opened on the 7th May, and on the 12th a magazine exploded in the town and formed a breach, which was assaulted at dusk the following evening; the French columns, after a short struggle, penetrated into the streets, making a general slaughter, when most of the inhabitants fled for safety into the castle, which thus being crowded to excess surrendered on a few shells being thrown into it. The next enterprize of this successful commander was against Mequinenza,

15th May.  
Capture of  
Mequinen-  
za.

\* See Moniteur, 13th January, 1810.

CHAP. a small work situated on a high rock at the  
 VIII. junction of the Segre with the Ebro. The con-  
 1810. duct of the governor sullied the martial reputa-  
 tion of the eastern provinces, as he capitulated  
 on the 8th June, after five days' resistance so  
 feebly conducted as to draw upon him the re-  
 proaches of the very captors. These conquests  
 completely assured the French dominion over  
 Aragon, and left General Suchet's army at liberty  
 to act against the neighbouring provinces.

The spring of 1810 may be considered to have  
 been a second crisis in the affairs of the Peninsula,  
 as by a succession of desultory and ill-planned  
 enterprizes on the part of the Spaniards, all their  
 armies had been annihilated, the greater num-  
 ber of their fortresses reduced or blockaded, and  
 three fourths of the kingdom subdued. The  
 most sanguine could not hope to see the natives  
 alone successfully resist the French, as whilst  
 England had turned her energies to another  
 theatre of war (the Scheldt), the intruders had  
 been uniformly successful in every province, and  
 1st April. Napoleon, having completed a family alliance  
 with the Emperor of Austria, stood pledged to  
 his people and to the world to conquer Portugal  
 and drive the British into the sea. "When I  
 shall show myself beyond the Pyrenees the  
 frightened leopard will fly to the ocean to avoid  
 shame, defeat and death. The triumph of my  
 arms will be the triumph of the genius of good

order over that of evil; of moderation, order and morality over civil war, anarchy and the bad passions."\* Unhappily his means to fulfil his boastings appeared unlimited; already, in the few months elapsed since the treaty of Vienna, had one hundred thousand men been transported from the Danube to the Ebro, and the French forces in the Peninsula swelled to 250,000 combatants; whilst the English nation, desponding at the general ill success of the war, and dissatisfied with the waste of their military strength in the Scheldt, were divided on the policy of persevering in active hostilities, and losing the season for exertion in political debate.

CHAP.  
VIII.  
1810.

The military operations in the Peninsula were lightly undertaken. Public opinion, to which all the measures of government in a free state are subservient, warmly inclining towards a cause so congenial to the feelings of Englishmen, parliamentary opposition, generally so useful in canvassing and restraining the projects of ministers, hurried them on this occasion into action, and throughout the nation for a considerable period unanimity of sentiment and one common hope of success were indulged by all parties. The first reverses broke the charm: as a natural attendant on a popular form of

\* Buonaparte's speech to the Legislative Body, December 4th, 1809.

CHAP.

VIII.

1810.

government, the disappointment which arose from the general delusion was made a charge against the executive, and a difference of opinion commenced, though more as to the conduct than as to the policy of active co-operation. The reverses of the second campaign led to serious doubts of the issue of the contest. Many patriotic and enlightened senators in this session argued forcibly and sensibly on the little probability of success, and urged the withdrawing of the army; happily, however, the majority were not prepared to pass suddenly to such an extreme, and at the end of March, after a warm debate on four successive nights respecting the merits of the expedition to the Scheldt, a decision of the great council of the nation retained in power the abettors of active hostilities, and the manly resolution followed of sharing, if we could not ward off, the blow aimed at our ancient and confiding ally. The Portuguese subsidiary force was in consequence augmented to 30,000 men, at the annual cost of nearly one million sterling, and some few battalions were sent out to reinforce the army; with the command of which, the honour and future reputation of England, the independence of Portugal, and the last hope of the Peninsula, were committed to the prudence and judgment of Lord Wellington.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Preparations for the Invasion and Defence of Portugal—Marshal Massena reduces Ciudad Rodrigo and gains Possession of Almeida—advances against Lisbon—is opposed and repulsed at Busaco—turns that Position—Lord Wellington falls back on his Lines—vainly courts an Attack—The French retire into Cantonments—the English follow their Movements—Marshal Massena sends to Paris soliciting Reinforcements—Exertions of the Militia—Public Feeling in France and England—Cortes of Spain assemble—nominate another Regency—A combined Force defeated in the Attack of Frangerola—Military Events in Catalonia.*

To ensure the conquest of Portugal and the expulsion of the British, the preparations were very considerable. Three corps commanded by Marshal Ney, Generals Junot and Reynier, composing an army of 66,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry, were united for that purpose near Salamanca, and the 5th corps, under Marshal Mortier, was ordered to assemble at Zafra and threaten the Alemtejo frontier in furtherance of their movements. Marshal Massena, heretofore considered the boldest and most fortunate of Buonaparte's lieutenants, was sent from France to direct the enterprize; and to give still further importance to the operation, a strong body of the imperial guard crossed the Pyrenees, and the remainder was held in readiness for the same

CHAP.  
IX.  
1810.

CHAP. destination, being a strong intimation that the  
IX. Emperor himself intended to follow.

1810.

The force organized to oppose this threatened invasion did not exceed 48,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry; the half of it composed of militia and the young Portuguese levies yet untried in a general action,\* and of whose martial character a very unfavourable judgment continued to be entertained, notwithstanding their rapid advancement in discipline and instruction. To give them steadiness and confidence, the troops of the two nations were at this period brigaded together, in the proportion of one Portuguese to two British battalions; and even beyond this support, the foresight of Lord Wellington had provided a further auxiliary to compensate their little experience. Anticipating the decisive crisis now arrived, and resolved not to commit his army in action except under the most favourable circumstances, he had, as far back as the previous October, caused a position covering Lisbon to be retrenched in the strongest manner, with the intention, on the advance of the invading force, to retire upon it, and there decide the fate of the Peninsula. Abrantes and Peniche were at the same time ordered to be further strengthened, and various other points fortified in support of a protracted system of warfare, and should all

\* The British force in Portugal in March, 1810, was precisely 18,607 infantry and 2,755 cavalry.—See Appendix, 11.

these precautions prove unavailing, a strong position was retrenched around Fort St. Julian at the mouth of the Tagus to ensure the re-embarkation of the army. Ten thousand peasants, abstracted by the zeal of the local authorities from their own pursuits, were weekly relieved on these duties, and it is worthy of remark, as showing the secrecy observed, that, notwithstanding the magnitude of the work, no account of its progress ever became public, and the invaders remained ignorant of the formidable nature of the barrier raising against them, till they found the allied army arrayed on it to stop their further advance.

CHAP.  
IX.  
1810.

The siege of Ciudad Rodrigo was undertaken with two corps only, General Reynier's being detached to the left of the Tagus for the greater facility of procuring subsistence. On the 11th of June, the trenches were opened on the hill to the north of the city called the Great Teson. The garrison, which exceeded eight thousand in number, occupied the convents of Santa Cruz, St. Francisco, St. Domingo, and the suburbs, as advanced posts; the two former were carried after a vigorous resistance, when the French established a second parallel against the town and erected heavy batteries on the Lower Teson, by the fire of which, and of riflemen placed in pits, they completely kept down the artillery of the place and pushed the sap to the glacis; the

Siege of  
Ciudad  
Rodrigo.

CHAP. garrison nevertheless continued firmly to resist  
 IX: till the 10th of July, when a practicable breach  
 1810. having been formed in the *fausse-braie* and in the body of the place, the counterscarp blown in, and the troops assembled in the trenches for the assault, as no hope of relief was held out, General Hervasti, the governor, made an honourable capitulation. Two days previously, a body of guerrilla cavalry, under Don Julian, which had been accidentally shut up in the place by the suddenness of the investment, fearing to be treated as banditti by the French, sallied out, cut their way through the besieger's posts, and entered Portugal.

The allied army was at this period cantoned in three corps; the main body, 22,000 infantry and 2,500 cavalry, under the personal command of Lord Wellington, at Vizeu, Celorico, Guardaf &c. with the light division, 4,000 men, in advance of Almeida, which fortress was supplied for a siege, but garrisoned chiefly with militia; a corps of 13,000 infantry and 900 cavalry, under Lieutenant General Hill, on the right of the frontier, to observe the force under Reynier; and the third, a body of 10,000 infantry, in reserve, under Major General Leith, at Thomar.

Investment  
 of Almeida.  
 24th July.

On the 24th of July the enemy crossed the frontier to invest Almeida; a system of mines which had been previously prepared for the destruction of Fort Conception being exploded



on their approach, with such effect as to render it defenceless for the remainder of the war. General Crauford, in command of the Light Division, animated by a desire to interrupt the investment, remained with his left flank near the fortress and his right on the high ground above Val de Mula till the whole corps of Marshal Ney closely approached his front; he was then suddenly and vigorously attacked, and notwithstanding a smart fire from the fortress overpowered and driven down the hill to the edge of the Coa; rain had rendered the fords impassable, and the rear-guard had to sustain a furious attack whilst the division filed over the bridge; but through the steady discipline of the troops, the utmost efforts of the enemy to break them failed, and the division finally effected the passage with the loss of 30 killed and 270 wounded or made prisoners. General Silveira took advantage of this forward movement of the enemy to invest, with a body of Portuguese troops, the castle of Sanabria, the garrison of which, consisting of a Swiss battalion, capitulated on the 9th of August, after six days blockade, at the moment that a French division approached for their relief. 9th August.

On entering Portugal, Marshal Massena, by the agency of the Marquis de Alorna and other Portuguese officers who had remained in the service of France on the convention of Cintra,

Proclamations of the French and English.

CHAP. and by proclamations addressed to the fears and  
IX. interests of the inhabitants, endeavoured to gain  
1810. their assistance, or at least their neutrality; he represented the French as the real friends and the English as the enemies of Portugal—that resistance was vain—his own forces, 110,000, being too numerous for the feeble army of the British General to oppose for an instant; and concluded by threatening the desolation of the country, the conflagration of the villages and the sacking of the towns, should resistance be offered, but promising kind treatment and every favour as the reward of submission. The conduct of the French soldiery, however, little corresponded with the professions of their chief, for, after crossing the Coa, they spread over the frontier of Beira, plundering the villages, and committing the most outrageous excesses on the persons of the credulous inhabitants, who, on the faith of Massena's promises, quietly awaited their approach and submissively obeyed their commands. Advantage was taken of this conduct to issue a proclamation on the 4th of August, commanding all individuals to remove their effects out of reach of the enemy, forbidding all communication with them, and denouncing as traitors and threatening with most severe punishment any persons in authority who should remain to receive the invaders.

Ground was broken before Almeida on the

15th of August. The first batteries opened on the 25th, and soon afterwards a magazine, which contained nearly all the powder in the place, blew up with a tremendous explosion, killing many men and injuring the defences. A Portuguese officer of artillery treacherously communicated to the besiegers the exhausted state of the ammunition, who, in consequence, demanded the immediate surrender of the garrison. The Governor, Brigadier General Cox, after some negociation, finding the French aware of the reduced state of his means, capitulated on the following day—the regular troops to be prisoners of war; the militia to return to their homes, but not to serve again during the contest. The articles of the capitulation were unblushingly violated by the French, who constrained the militia to act as pioneers, and by menaces and vexations induced the regulars to enrol themselves under the command of the expatriated officers; in consequence, Lord Wellington declared the former absolved from their engagements not to serve; and in a very short period nearly every individual found opportunity to rejoin the standard of his countrymen.

CHAP.

IX.

1810.

Surrender  
of Almeida.

26th Aug.

The resistance of Almeida, it was expected, would have delayed the advance of the invaders till the autumnal rains, when the earthen roads, excellent in summer, become nearly impassable, many fords cease to be practicable, and every

CHAP. difficulty of supplying an army becomes greatly  
IX. aggravated. Its immediate fall was therefore a  
1810. most important advantage, which the invaders  
did not fail to dilate upon and hold it up as an  
additional proof of the absurdity of opposing  
their arms. These incessant boastings of the  
modern French, supported by the fortuitous cir-  
cumstance of the British never having been op-  
posed to them on an equal field of action, had  
almost raised a belief that they had acquired a de-  
cided superiority over their former worthy rivals.  
This impression, unluckily, was not altogether  
confined to those who judged merely from the  
chain of events; but many who had personal  
experience of the bravery of the troops were  
shaken in their confidence by the language of  
the enemy, so much so, that the most desponding  
predictions from officers with the army filled  
the public prints, or circulated in society, till an  
anxiety almost amounting to apprehension was  
raised in every bosom for the issue of the con-  
test. The instructions under which Lord Wel-  
lington acted were evidently drawn up with  
such feeling, and framed to discourage boldness  
of conduct, by throwing upon his decision the  
entire blame of any disaster that might follow,  
being in substance, that His Majesty would be  
better pleased that the army were withdrawn  
much too soon, than that its safe embarkation  
should be risked by one moment's too great delay.

The Portuguese rulers, deeply impressed with a sense of the fatal consequences that must attend unsuccessful resistance, behaved with manliness and policy; for whilst openly exerting themselves to sustain the national energies and fill the ranks of their armies, they virtually resigned all power into the hands of their ally; even naming the British ambassador a member of the Regency and the British admiral to the command of their marine. The lower classes, as matter of necessity, obeyed the decrees of the government; but to the nobility and landed proprietors, who sought military employment with avidity, a higher degree of patriotism ought to be assigned, as the immense fleet retained in the Tagus, and the extensive works throwing up on its banks, must have made them contemplate the probability of being abandoned by their allies to the resentment of the invaders.\*

CHAP.  
IX.  
1810.

This was an awful moment for all Europe equally as for Portugal. It must be regarded as having been the extreme elevation of Napo-

\* How strongly that was apprehended may be collected from the fact of the richest monastic establishment in Portugal (St. Vicente) and others having, as early as June, embarked most of their valuables, and the members holding a ship chartered in readiness to follow. Many merchants sent their most costly goods afloat, as did several persons in office their private effects: the heavy baggage of the army was also kept on board of transports.

CHAP. leon's power and influence. By his alliance  
 IX. with the Autocrat of the north, the nations of  
 1810. the continent were menaced with being divided  
 between two great states. In the short space  
 of one year, Rome, Tuscany, Holland, the Illy-  
 rian provinces, the Hans Towns, the Valais and  
 part of the Tyrol had been annexed to the  
 French empire; and the Emperor Alexander, as  
 a counter-balance, had appropriated to himself  
 Finland, Moldavia, Walachia, and part of Gal-  
 licia. The only other independent European  
 state, Austria, could make no opposition to the  
 united interests of two such mighty potentates,  
 and looked for security in a faithful adherence  
 to her alliance with France, which was likely to  
 be strengthened by the pregnancy of Maria  
 Louisa, now exultingly announced. Hitherto  
 no serious failure had brought into question the  
 invincibility of the French arms, and the only  
 obstacle to the renewal of the western empire  
 appeared to be 50,000 Portugueze and British,  
 over whom, in this campaign, his lieutenant  
 had been decidedly successful, and apparently  
 had but to march forward to overwhelm.

French  
 march on  
 Lisbon.

In the middle of September, Marshal Massena, having been joined by Reynier's corps, (which recrossed the Tagus at the Barca de Alconete, in the beginning of July, and had since occupied Zarzamayor, Penamacor, Monsanto, &c.) put his army in movement in three columns on Viseu, and Lord Wellington with the main body of the

allies retired along the left bank of the Mondego. The French artillery, with the cavalry, marched on the right by Pinhel and Trancosa; and moving at a most tedious rate over that rough and rocky road, the escort occasionally preceded or followed the train to ease their horses, which gave opportunity, near the latter place, on the 20th, for the militia and some Portuguese dragoons, under General Trant, to fall upon the convoy when totally unprotected. A few French officers and men of the train, however, quickly uniting themselves into a body, made such a steady appearance that the militia hesitated seriously to attack, and the convoy under their slight escort retrograded on the cavalry with little loss. This affair, however, delayed the concentration of the French army at Viseu till the 22d, when Lord Wellington withdrew behind the Alva, the light division and some cavalry only remaining in front of the enemy at Martagoa on the Criz.

CHAP.  
IX.  
1810.

To form a just idea of Marshal Massena's march on Lisbon, and of the manœuvres opposed to him, it is necessary to know the peculiarities of the country. Conceive a quadrangular tract of territory 100 miles long and fifty miles broad, bounded on the west by the sea, on the north and south by the nearly parallel rivers Mondego and Tagus, and the eastern confines filled by an immense mass of mountains, impenetrable to an hostile army when defended with moderate re-

CHAP. solution, called the Serra de Estrella; these  
 IX. mountains closing on the Tagus in the south,  
 1810. but leaving a space with a good road between  
 them and the Mondego on the north. An enemy  
 intending to arrive at the south west point of  
 the figure (the situation of Lisbon) from without  
 these mountains, must consequently either move  
 by the road between the Estrella and the Mon-  
 dego, or must cross one or other of the two  
 rivers and recross it at a point below the Serra,  
 all approach to the capital from the Alemtejo  
 being interdicted by the Tagus, which is of  
 considerable breadth, and never fordable for five  
 and twenty miles above the city.

Marshal Massena, by obliging each soldier to  
 carry fifteen days biscuit, was enabled to march  
 his whole force from Viseu by one route, on  
 the north of the Mondego, and to avoid all en-  
 counter with his opponents amongst the strong  
 ravines of the Serra de Estrella, so numerous on  
 the other bank. The road thus selected crosses  
 at three leagues short of Coimbra a high steep  
 mountain, lying perpendicular to his line of  
 march, called the Serra de Busaco, being a  
 branch of the large range of mountains in the  
 north, bounding the valley of the Vouga. The  
 Serra de Busaco terminates almost perpendicu-  
 larly on the Mondego, and on the opposite bank  
 of that river, a mountainous branch of the Serra  
 de Estrella, called the Serra de Murcella, forms



nearly a continuation of the line of Busaco, creating an obstacle on the southern as great as the former on the northern bank. To penetrate by any tolerable road into Estremadura from Viseu, it was absolutely necessary for the invaders to pass over one of these Serras. Lord Wellington, who had placed officers in the mountains to ascertain the direction of their march, on being made acquainted with it, in order to check the rapidity of their progress and gain time for the removal of his magazines from Coimbra and Condeixa, crossed the Mondego from the Serra de Murcella, and occupied Busaco with nearly his whole army, leaving on the left bank a force only sufficient to repel any reconnoissance that might be attempted across the river. The light division and the cavalry posted on the Criz waited the approach of the enemy, and then, having destroyed the bridge, also fell back on the same point. Previously to the advance of Marshal Massena, till it could be clearly ascertained by what road he intended to enter Portugal, it was necessary to keep the corps under Lieutenant General Hill to guard the line of the Tagus, and the division of Major General Leith in reserve, to support him. By a well regulated movement, these corps (the former breaking up from Sobriera-formosa on the 17th, passing through Villa de Rey, fording the Zezere at the Barca de Codes, and afterwards

CHAP.

IX.

1810.

CHAP. following the military road by Espinhal,) joined  
 IX. the main body of the army on the mountain of  
 1810. Busaco, on the 26th September, the day of the  
 arrival of the French army in front of it; and  
 thus, at the required moment, the whole of the  
 allied forces were concentrated on the first fa-  
 vourable position which offered itself for opposing  
 the untried Portuguese levies to the veterans  
 of France.

Battle of  
 Busaco.

27th Sept.

The Serra of Busaco is 250 feet more elevated than the ground in its front, with an ascent too difficult for cavalry to act, and as its height nearly precludes the use of artillery to the assailants, it forms an almost unattackable position when fully occupied; but as the ridge is eight miles in extent, a considerable army is required for that purpose. Massena, not aware of the junction of the corps under Generals Hill and Leith, calculated that the front would be very weakly lined with men, and with that impression, early in the morning of the 27th, under cover of a cloud of light troops, pushed up 25,000 men (five divisions) in two columns of attack, the one under Marshal Ney by the main road on his immediate right of the convent; the other under General Reynier by the road of St. Antonia de Cantara, about four miles further to his right; the corps of General Junot with the cavalry being held in reserve in the plain. The steepness and inequalities of the

face of the mountain covered the ascent of the columns, and they gained the summit with little other loss than from the occasional fire of artillery placed on the flanking points. Along such an extensive front all parts could not be equally guarded, and the main body of General Reynier's column had the good fortune to penetrate about two miles from the pass of St. Antonio, at a spot where only piquets of observation and some light troops were posted. He immediately began to deploy his force unopposed ; but General Picton speedily brought forward half a battalion with which and the light troops he skirmished till the remainder of his division came up ; he then boldly advanced against the French line with the bayonet, and General Leith, at the same moment arriving on their flank with a brigade of his division, and joining in the charge, they were forced down the hill. Marshal Ney was less fortunate in the point where he attempted to form, as he found the whole division of General Crauford, about 5000 men, in line prepared to receive him ; and after sustaining a most destructive fire of musquetry, being vigorously charged with the bayonet on his front and flanks, the leading battalions of his column were nearly annihilated, and the remainder driven off the summit with prodigious loss. Such of the assailants as escaped unhurt hastened to join their comrades in the plain, and in three quarters

CHAP.

IX.

1810.

App. 12.

CHAP. of an hour from the commencement of the at-  
IX. tack not a hostile body could be discerned on  
the face of the mountain. A continued fire be-  
1810. tween the light troops was maintained through-  
out the day at the bottom and along the face  
of the position, and great movements were ob-  
served in the enemy's main body, but no fur-  
ther serious attack was attempted; the expe-  
riment of the morning having cost the French  
2000 dead on the field, a general officer and 300  
men prisoners, and from 5 to 6000 wounded,  
whilst the allies had only 200 killed and 1000  
wounded.

The good effects of discipline and confidence  
were never more strongly exemplified than in  
this affair; the young Portuguese troops rival-  
ling in steadiness and gallantry their veteran  
allies. Subsequent trials confirmed the sanguine  
hopes of co-operation induced by their conduct  
on this occasion, and after many campaigns to-  
gether the only difference of reputation between  
them and their insular brethren, arose out of  
their several opportunities for deeds of honour-  
able emulation. Man differs not essentially  
from man in any European climate; their phy-  
sical powers under equal food are nearly every  
where alike—a bad or arbitrary government may  
debase the minds, or luxury corrupt the morals  
of the rich, but that degree of animal courage  
implanted by nature, which fits men for confi-

dence under able leaders, can scarcely be extinguished in the mass of a nation.\*

CHAP.

IX.

1810.

Massena  
turns the  
position of  
Busaco.

The repulse at Busaco had nearly been fatal to the progress of the invaders, for after it no hope could remain of forcing the position in front; to cross the Mondego and endeavour to force the Serra de Murcella was equally hopeless, as the allies, from their shorter communication, could always occupy it first, and to remain was impossible from the want of provisions. In this dilemma passed away inactive the morning of the 28th, when it having been ascertained that a practicable road passed over the mountain at Avalina da Cima, about six miles to the north of Busaco, Marshal Massena, anxious to sustain a high reputation founded on bold and persevering conduct, decided to turn his opponents by a flank manœuvre. In the course of the afternoon he made a variety of movements to conceal his intentions, and at dark

\* To Marshal Beresford the high credit is due of having drawn out these qualities, and of having, in an almost incredibly short space of time, re-established discipline and revived confidence in the Portuguese army, indeed of having almost created that chief engine in the salvation of the Peninsula. His Majesty, to mark his sense of the zeal and perseverance displayed by the Marshal, immediately on intelligence of the gallant behaviour of the Portuguese, conferred on him the distinguished honour of knighthood of the Bath, at that time strictly confined to officers of the highest rank and reputation.

CHAP.

IX.

1810.

commenced his march in one column, carrying in the centre his wounded and other incumbrances; fortune seconded his efforts, and he gained the summit unopposed, as a corps of Portugueze militia from the north, ordered to occupy the passes near Sardao, from a misapprehension of his movements, made a considerable detour and arrived too late. From the top of the mountain a march of three or four hours on the morning of the 29th brought his army into the high road from Oporto to Lisbon.\*

British retire to their lines.

30th Sept.

The Busaco range being thus turned, Lord Wellington fell back on Coimbra, and the next day crossed the river, nearly all the inhabitants of the city accompanying the columns of march. The banks of the Mondego are generally high and rocky, offering many good positions, in

\* As a corps posted in the mountains near Sardao and Avalina could not possibly connect its retreat to the southward with the army on the Serra de Busaco, in case of failure of success, Lord Wellington would not detach any portion of his main body to occupy those passes, but confided their defence to the militia intended to fall back on Oporto.

It cannot be supposed that a corps of militia would have been equal to have stopped the march of the whole French army; but those who know the narrowness and difficulties of the road, and the tremendous precipices under which it occasionally passes, must agree in thinking that few commanders would attempt to force the passage against a very moderate resistance, having an army of nearly equal strength not two hours' march from his flank.

which, after the recent proof that full dependence might be placed on the firmness of the Portuguese, there was every probability of successfully barring the passage; but as such an attempt would have the effect of protracting the war on ground most favourable to the enemy, Lord Wellington, steadily adhering to his original views, continued his retreat through Condeixa. That town, situated on the ridge of a hill, affords no facility for moving round it, and the main road winds through a long narrow street, extremely embarrassing to the march of a large body. The inhabitants of Coimbra and the country adjacent crowding in with their cars at the same time with the troops, added to the obstructions, and the population, unaccustomed to such scenes, were seized with the utmost alarm: they all rushed out of their houses and mixed with the retiring mass: an officer of rank cut the traces of some of the bullock cars which blocked up the narrow streets, and a scene of confusion ensued likely to have been attended with fatal consequences, but for the great exertion of the officers and the good discipline of the troops. After quitting Condeixa the most perfect regularity prevailed, and in proportion as the French advanced, the army retired one or two marches before them, in echellons of divisions, by the road of Espinhal on Thomar and Santarem, and that of Leyria on Riomayor and Torres Vedras. Scarcely anything marked these as hostile move-

CHAP.  
IX.  
1810.

CHAP. ments except some slight affairs of cavalry and  
 IX. the extreme panic of the inhabitants, who, as the  
 1810. columns passed, young and old, rich and poor, fled  
 to the neighbouring woods and mountains, or  
 journeyed with the troops towards the capital.

Description  
 of the lines.

Lisbon being situated at the extremity of a peninsula formed by the sea and the Tagus, it is apparent that if an army be posted across the neck of the peninsula, below the point where the river ceases to be fordable, no enemy can penetrate to the city without a front attack of the army so formed. It was on this principle that the lines covering Lisbon were planned by Lord Wellington. Nature drew the rude outline of a strong defensive position, and art rendered it perfect. A tract of country of thirty miles, extending from the mouth of the Zizandra on the ocean to Alhandra on the Tagus, was modelled into a field of battle; mountains were scarped perpendicularly, rivers dammed, and inundations formed; all roads favourable to the enemy were destroyed, and others made to facilitate the communications of the defenders; formidable works were erected to strengthen and support the weak points; whilst numerous cannon, planted on inaccessible posts, commanded the different approaches, and gave an equality of defence to the whole position. Nor were either labour or expense spared to render it equally favourable for offensive movements. Such was the ground to which the army made its last retro-



grade movement on the 8th October, concluding a retreat of 200 miles, performed in front of a superior enemy, without loss or irregularity. Three days afterwards, it was joined, according to previous arrangement, by 6000 Spanish troops from the Alemtejo, under the Marquis de la Romana.

CHAP.  
IX.  
1810.

Marshal Massena, on entering Coimbra, finding no preparation made to dispute the passage of the Mondego, felt persuaded that the English intended to quit the country, and after three days halt, marched with his main body to endeavour to add to his triumph by the capture of their rear-guard. To facilitate his movements, he left his sick and wounded with their attendants, to the number of 5000, in Coimbra, which city was a few days afterwards forcibly entered by Colonel Trant with the Portuguese troops, on their return from Sardo, and the whole of the French made prisoners. The militia, assisted by the organized peasantry of the country, likewise took possession successively of the different towns that the enemy quitted in their advance; and from the moment of passing the Mondego, the French army was deprived of all communication beyond the circuit of its cavalry patrols. Massena nevertheless pushed forward in the full confidence of success, and his cavalry and advanced guard, on the afternoon of the 10th, drove the allies out of Sobral, from whence he first discovered the formidable works which

The French  
pursue the  
British,—

7th Oct.

CHAP.

IX.

1810.

are checked  
at Sobral.

14th Oct.

covered his antagonists. To judge from the instant halt he made, and the retrograde movement that followed as soon as it became dark, they struck him as much with respect as astonishment, and three days elapsed before he again advanced to the same spot.\* He then made a strict reconnoissance of the right of the lines, and placed the three corps of his army separately in bivouac in front of it. On the main road to Lisbon, through Zibiera, where the works were fewer than on the other parts of the line, it being intended as a manœuvring position for the main body of the army, he pushed his piquets into contact with those of the allies. In adjusting their posts, a sharp skirmish took place, and everything denoted a meditated attack. The allied troops were daily under arms an hour before daylight, with the General-in-Chief in readiness to direct their operations: the weather was generally wet, and the duty irksome; yet all supported it with cheerfulness, in the full confidence of annihilating their opponents in the threatened attempt; but after a week had elapsed, expectation would no longer support itself, and the hope of an immediate triumph vanished.

During the retrograde movements of the army, the greatest distrust and apprehension prevailed at Lisbon; the merchants and rich

\* The march of his rear divisions was probably retarded by the heavy autumnal rains, which commenced on the very day that the allies entered the lines.

proprietors embarked their wealth, and provided themselves with means of flight, and every pursuit was suspended, from apprehension that the British intended to re-embark; but in a few days, when it became known that the two armies had halted in contact with each other, and that the defenders were vainly courting an attack, confidence began to revive: arrangements were made for procuring supplies for the town and its increased population: hospitals and public buildings were thrown open for the reception of the fugitives: regulations were adopted for their daily supply, and order and quiet at length so took away all idea of danger, that parties of amusement were not unfrequent to view the hostile camps.

CHAP.  
 IX.  
 1810.

Marshal Massena, having convinced himself of the impossibility of effecting anything against the lines with the force under his command, employed officers with strong escorts to ascertain the nature and resources of the country in his rear, in order to form a plan of future operations; in the meanwhile the most perfect quiet prevailed along the outposts, not a hostile shot being fired, each party respecting the other, and patiently attending the decision of its chief. The militia, however, under Colonels Wilson and Trant, with great boldness closed on the enemy's rear to Leyria and Ourem, and the governor of Peniche, General Blunt, judiciously reoccupied

## CHAP.

## IX.

1810.

French re-  
tire into can-  
tonments.

The British  
move for-  
ward.

Obidos as soon as they passed, and with much success employed small detachments to interrupt their foraging parties in that direction: at length every supply in front of the lines having been exhausted, and the approach of winter rendering cover indispensable to the health of the troops, the French army, on the night of the 14th November, broke up from its bivouac, and retired into cantonments in the district round Thomar.

The allied army immediately followed the movements of the retiring force; and when it halted at Santarem made a demonstration of attack to ascertain if a final retreat were intended, or only a change of position. The enemy standing firm, the columns were recalled, and the troops were placed in cantonments at Cartaxo (head quarters), Alcoentre, Azambuja, Alemquer and Villa-franca, in readiness to fall back on the lines should the French be reinforced, or otherwise quietly to remain under cover during the winter, prepared to take advantage of the movements which want of subsistence must ultimately impose upon them, and the foresight of which had partly led to the adoption of this Fabian defence of Portugal. To prevent the enemy communicating with the Alemtejo and drawing supplies from thence, Lieutenant General Hill's corps crossed to the left of the Tagus, and was cantoned at Barcos,

Chamusca, &c. floating bridges being established on all the rivers in its rear to the ferry opposite Alhandra, to ensure a retreat on that point should it become necessary. At the same time the promontory of Almada, commanding the anchorage of Lisbon on the southern side, and from whence the city might be bombarded from a distance of 1800 yards, was ordered to be retrenched with every means that could be procured, without an interference with the further strengthening of the lines, still considered the primary object, and where one division remained on the left at Torres Vedras, to guard against any wide movement on that flank.

CHAP.  
IX.  
1810.

The French, to secure their cantonments, strongly intrenched an advanced corps at Santarem behind the Rio-Mayor, and made a post of Punhete in their rear, with a bridge across the Zezere: their left was naturally covered by the Tagus, and their right, which was open and exposed to the attacks of the irregulars, was allotted to the cavalry. Marshal Massena established his personal head-quarters at Torres-Novas.

It has been stated that, on a knowledge of the excesses committed by the French troops that first passed the frontier, proclamations were issued by Lord Wellington and the Portuguese Government, commanding all persons to leave their homes on the approach of the invaders, and

CHAP. IX. destroy all articles of subsistence not to be carried off. Terror produced obedience to the first

1810. part of the mandate; the men and women, with their flocks and herds, everywhere disappeared, and the country bordering the line of operations became a frightful solitude; but as no measures were taken to enforce the latter part, the natural feelings of mankind rendered it nugatory. Most individuals remained by their immoveable property till their personal safety required flight, when it became too late to think of any thing beyond avoiding pursuit. Those more provident who early fled, too generally secreted their stores, in the futile hope of their escaping observation, but which being invariably discovered served equally to defeat the object in view; and the inhabitants of whole districts far removed from the scene, deeming themselves secure, remained quiet till, being unexpectedly surrounded in the extensive excursions of the enemy's cavalry, they had no opportunity to remove anything. This was particularly the case in the fertile and abundant country to the eastward of Santarem, where half the population of the towns remained, and it may be safely asserted that not one fiftieth part of the reaped corn was removed. Besides, the chief subsistence of the peasantry of Portuguese Estremadura is maize, which is still green at the commencement of October; the whole of the valley

of the Tagus and the plains of Gallegoa were covered with it to an extent beyond the power of the whole population speedily to have removed, and as the grain will remain on the stalk throughout the winter with little injury, it alone assured the subsistence of the invaders for some months, even had every thing else been destroyed. This district also presented the inestimable advantage of a strong front, with security on the flanks and in the rear to admit of the soldiers dispersing over the country to collect the supplies, which, from the absence of the peasantry, became the daily practice after morning parade and it had been ascertained that the allies were not in movement. Thus the cantonments to which the French retired united many great advantages, and were in all respects favourable whilst they retained the superiority or even an equality of force to their opponents.

Marshal Massena early sent General Foy to Paris to represent the situation of his army and the necessity of great reinforcements, and in the meanwhile requested General Gardanne, commanding on the Agueda, to collect and escort a temporary supply of ammunition for his use till the decision of the Emperor should be known. That officer marched in person with a strong body of infantry and cavalry by Castello Branco over the Estrella road, till being within ten or twelve miles of the French

CHAP.  
IX.  
1810

Massena  
solicits rein-  
forcements.

General  
Gardanne  
attempts to  
join him :

CHAP.

IX.

1810.

precipitately retrogrades.

27th Nov.

General Drouet joins.

15th Oct.

30th Dec.

posts on the Zezere, he was struck with a sudden panic on hearing from a peasant that they had been withdrawn, and without attempting to ascertain the fact by a reconnoissance, precipitately retired. At Os Cardigos he was fired upon by a small party of the Ordenanza, under Colonel Grant, which so added to his panic that he abandoned the convoy, and pressing the retreat of his men, they fell into the greatest disorder; in which state being pursued for several leagues, they lost all their baggage and some hundreds of their number. On regaining the frontier, and making his report to General Drouet, commanding the 9th corps d'armée, which had recently moved forward to the Coa, to support the operations in Portugal, he decided to march with 10 or 12,000 men, and open a communication with Marshal Massena by the road on the left of the Mondego, leaving the remainder of his corps under General Claparede at Guarda, within the Portuguese frontier, to drive away the militia from his rear. That force, shortly after Massena's change of position, spread over all Beira, and under such distinguished officers as Generals Silveira, Bacellar, Trant, Miller, and Wilson, promised to acquire confidence and discipline, and to form an obstacle in rear of the invaders which would render their retreat precarious; but several regiments being united into a body at Trancosa, and imprudently committed in action




with the corps under General Claparede, they were defeated and driven with loss beyond the Douro, which checked these rising expectations and rendered their after efforts comparatively trivial. General Drouet not having been opposed on his march effected his junction with Marshal Massena without loss at the end of December, and his troops were placed in cantonments round Leyria to strengthen the right flank of the invaders.

CHAP.  
IX.  
1810.

27th Dec.

The contest thus balanced at the close of the year:—the French had failed in their original schemes, but they had supplied their loss, and it was open to them to draw reinforcements to any amount from their armies echelloned back from Lisbon to the Pyrenees; whereas the British still remained in the same force, being the smallest number deemed possible to defend the country, and could not attempt any bold offensive measure without risking their entire stake, and consequently it rested with the invaders to pursue the course they should deem best.

This advantage must partly be attributed to the difference between the uncontrolled sway of a despotic, and the fearful responsibility of a constitutional government, and partly to the difference of feeling with which the two nations regarded the operations of their armies. Napoleon, unchecked by respect for truth, caused his failures to be silently passed over or represented as triumphs, even stooping on more

CHAP. IX.  1810. than one occasion of disaster to the trick of publishing a glowing account of success to amuse the Parisians, and inserting a less exaggerated statement in the gazettes forwarded to the army: any free discussion to the disadvantage of his military operations would have subjected the author to unlimited confinement in a dungeon of state: besides, public opinion was too united by national vanity to render opposition a means of attaining either wealth or reputation: his most flagrant falsifications therefore passed without exposure: indeed such was his authority over the press, that the most enlightened Frenchmen were kept in ignorance of the real nature of transactions affecting the honour and interests of their country, known in their fullest detail to the humblest individual in England.\* Napoleon had but to express his will, and all France, enthusiastic for military glory, would rush forward to second his efforts.

In this free state, on the contrary, every military operation was fully made known to the public, and beyond that candid discussion so desirable for forming a correct judgment, all its details were captiously arraigned for party purposes by writers and senators of talent: every disaster was magnified, and joy for every success

\* The destruction of the French fleet at Trafalgar was never mentioned in the government papers in France.

damped by reiterated assurances of its only serving to render more fatal that overwhelming disaster which must ultimately attend the temerity of opposing a British to a French army. At the commencement of the war, the Cabinet nobly stood forth as the advisers of the boldest measures, and strained every nerve to give them effect, but since the disasters experienced by the army under Sir John Moore, the operations in the Peninsula had been conducted more as an experiment that might succeed, than with a determination to command success. The English nation had been too long accustomed to a system of desultory enterprizes with attendant failure, to repose much confidence in the military councils of the empire or in the capacity of their commanders; and the ministry, during the spring and summer, weak in themselves and rendered distrustful by the severe loss resulting from their exertions in the two previous years, were not forward again to excite hope or to court the responsibility of disaster. It has been stated, that their instructions to Lord Wellington were evidently drawn up under those feelings, and framed to discourage perseverance by throwing the whole blame of unsuccessful resistance on the executive officer. A little later, when prompt and vigorous measures were required to support the firmness of their commander in his decision to remain, an unhappy mental malady

CHAP.  
IX.  
1810.

CHAP. of the sovereign, which threatened the termina-  
 IX. tion of their ministry, engrossed their attention  
 1810. and paralysed their exertions. The national  
 feeling, however, was much raised by the battle  
 of Busaco, the recapture of Coimbra, and the  
 check put to the progress of the invader by the  
 lines; and it rose into exultation on intelligence  
 of his change of position, which was considered  
 as the commencement of a final retreat. Then,  
 in consonance with the ordinary proceedings of a  
 government influenced by public opinion, a  
 strong body of troops, which they had not ven-  
 tured to send when they might have decided the  
 turn of affairs, was at the end of December  
 vauntingly embarked to share in the pursuit.

Affairs of  
Spain.

Composi-  
tion of the  
Cortes.

In Spain, after much time lost in historical re-  
 search, as to the modes of election pursued in  
 former convocations, the Cortes were at length  
 chosen on a rule formed for the occasion by the  
 Supreme Junta. All cities which had sent repre-  
 sentatives to the last assembly were to elect the  
 same number. The Provincial Juntas were each  
 to send a deputy, and the provinces one for each  
 50,000 inhabitants: the whole amounting to 276.  
 Twenty-six members were added as representa-  
 tives for the American provinces, the Columbian  
 and Philippine Islands, to be elected in the first  
 instance from the natives of those dependencies,  
 residing in Spain. The Supreme Junta proposed  
 to have balanced this popular assembly by a

chamber composed of grandees and the dignitaries of the church, but the Regency took on themselves to dispense with that part of the plan of the Junta, and those bodies were altogether excluded from taking a share in the legislation.

CHAP.

IX.

1810.

The first sitting of the Cortes was held at Cadiz on the 24th September, and after decreeing to themselves the title of Majesty, and confining that of the executive to Highness, and passing a self-denying ordonnance that no member should accept of any pension, honour, reward or favour from the executive, almost the first act of their authority was to dissolve with ignominy the Regency that had brought them into existence, and appoint another, of which General Blake was placed at the head.\* This act and a violent persecution of the Marquis del Palacio, which they directed because he wished to qualify his oath to the Cortes, as being without prejudice to that he had previously taken to Ferdinand, showed an arbitrary disposition that argued unfavourably for their rule; but during the autumn, they fully established a character for liberal feeling and enlightened views. They passed successively decrees to separate the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government; to release the press from many of

Conduct of  
the Cortes.

28th Nov.

17th Dec.

\* The other members were Don Pedro Agar and Don Gabriel Ciscar.

CHAP. its fetters, and to conciliate the colonies. They  
 IX. voted by acclamation,\* that the nation should  
 1810. never lay down its arms whilst a Frenchman re-  
 29th Dec. mained within the Pyrenees; and, after much  
 discussion, passed a law declaring null and of no  
 effect all treaties or conventions entered into by  
 Ferdinand whilst under the influence of Napo-  
 leon, and that he should not be considered free  
 till in the midst of the representatives of the peo-  
 ple.† These proceedings seemed exclusively to

\* Passed into a law 1st January, 1811.

† An attempt had been made in the spring (1810) by the English ministry to effect the escape of Ferdinand by the agency of an Irishman, under the title of Baron de Kolli, who was to convey him in disguise to the coast, where a squadron was in attendance to receive him. Kolli carried with him an autograph Latin letter from George the Third to Ferdinand, and was also furnished, as credentials, with an original letter in Latin in the handwriting of Charles IV. addressed to George III. in 1802, announcing the marriage of Ferdinand. This was backed in the handwriting of Marquis Wellesley, as having been delivered by his Lordship for a credential to Kolli under date of the 26th February, 1810. Kolli travelled through France undiscovered and contrived to be introduced into the royal residence at Valencia, under pretence of selling jewellery; he there opened his business to M. Amenaza, a confidential person in the employment of Ferdinand, who, apparently listening with delight, contrived to betray Kolli and all his papers to the French commandant. Ferdinand, not satisfied with the simple discovery, addressed a letter subsequently in his own name to the commandant, expressive of his horror at the infernal project, and calling for exemplary punishment on the agent; assuring him that he had nothing so much at heart

occupy the attention of the Spaniards at this interesting crisis to the prejudice of their military exertions, and the only enterprize worthy of notice during the autumn was sending a corps of 4000 Spanish and British troops from Cadiz under Lord Blayney, in the middle of October, to take, by a coup-de-main, the castle of Frangerola, near Malaga; the possession of which would have opened a point of communication with the neighbouring mountaineers, who still resisted the French, and it was expected would have led to the recovery of Malaga. The troops were disembarked in the Calle de Mora, twelve miles westward of the place, from whence the road proved very bad, and the march occupied many hours. On investing the castle, it was found so much more strongly garrisoned than had been anticipated, that an escalade was not deemed advisable; and twenty-four hours passed away in the operation of putting in battery some artillery from the ships, which gave time for General Sebastiani to arrive for its relief with a superior force. A few minutes previously to his appearance on the flank of the investing corps, the garrison made a sortie in front. Lord Blayney,

CHAP.  
IX.

1810.

Military  
operations.Expedition  
against  
Frangerola.

15th Oct.

as perfect submission to the will of Napoleon, and becoming the adopted son of his imperial and royal Majesty. These sentiments of Ferdinand being made public in the *Moniteur* of 6th April, 1810, gave rise to the decree last mentioned.

CHAP. who mistook the approaching force for Spaniards, was at the first onset made prisoner, with  
 IX. many men; and the remainder being pursued to  
 1810. the sea-side, were indebted to the men of war's launches for escaping from a watery grave.

Affairs of  
 Catalonia.

Catalonia appeared to be altogether overlooked by the government, and one sad train of disaster continued to attend the unequal struggle between the unaided patriotism of the inhabitants and the tactics of the intruders. General Suchet, as soon as secure on the side of Aragon by the capture of Lerida and Mequinenza, commenced preparations for the siege of Tortosa, the possession of which would give him the command of the best passage of the Ebro, and interpose an insurmountable obstacle to any united efforts of the three provinces bounded by its course. As early as the month of July he moved his troops into the environs of the place, where he intrenched Mora and Xerta, making the one a tête-de-pont across the Ebro, and the other a dépôt for his artillery and stores. The activity of the Catalan chiefs, however, long retarded the commencement of the siege. General O'Donnell, on the 14th September, assembled a considerable force at Mataro, from whence in person he made a rapid march, and surrounded in the town of Bispal a body of 500 men, commanded by a general officer, who, after some considerable firing of musketry, surrendered prisoners; at



the same time a detachment under Colonel Fleyres surprised and captured 150 men at St. Feliu, nearly 300 more at Palamos, and 70 in the little castle of Calonge.

CHAP.  
IX.  
1810.

Various other partial encounters took place in Upper Catalonia, till at the close of the year, after the peace with Austria, large reinforcements entered from France, and enabled Marshal M'Donald to post a corps at Perillo to cover the operation on that side. The place was then closely invested. On the 19th December, the French established themselves on the heights in front of Fort Orleans, and on the following night broke ground on the plain between that fort and the river. The garrison attempted repeated sorties, which were invariably repulsed with loss; and on the seventh night the covered way was crowned before the besiegers' batteries opened. The following afternoon a most daring sally was made to destroy the guns whilst bringing into the batteries. The Spaniards rushing out in strong bodies from fort Orleans, descended into the plain; one detachment overturned the guard of the trenches, burnt many gabions, and filled in a portion of the sap; but the division to seize the artillery was held in check till fresh troops were brought into the trenches, when the whole were driven back, leaving 400 killed and wounded on the ground.

Investment  
of Tortosa.

CHAP.

IX.

1811.

Tortosa  
capitulates.

On the 1st January, 1811, the seventeenth day of the siege, the counterscarp having been blown in, two good breaches being open, and the columns prepared for the assault, as Suchet refused to grant any terms, the governor surrendered at discretion. "The garrison marched out 7500 men, having lost 1500 during the attack; the besieging force of 10,000 men lost only 400. So small a loss, and the short duration of the siege, arose from the scientific direction of the approaches, and the well-selected situation of the batteries; or, in other words, to the proper application of the art of attacking places. Perhaps also, the bold and unlooked-for measure of carrying the approaches along the banks of the Ebro, entirely neglecting the works on the heights which overlook the plain, tended very much to produce these results. It may boldly be asserted that the attack of any other point would have required double the time, and have been far more bloody."\*

Surprise of  
Fort Balaguer.

The following morning witnessed the loss of the fort on the Col de Balaguer from want of vigilance in the garrison, who allowed themselves to be surprised and overpowered by a French detachment sent for that purpose.

In Upper Catalonia, a variety of spirited efforts were made during the siege by different

\* *Rélation du Siege de Tortose, par M. le Baron Rogniat, Lieutenant-General.*

leaders to arrest the tide of misfortune, and a highly praiseworthy exploit, though attended with an unfortunate result, was performed by a party of British seamen under Captain Fane. They landed on the 13th December at Palamos, and having by an impetuous attack dislodged a French battalion, obtained possession of a convoy of provision vessels lying under the guns of the mole; after which, confident in their natural boldness, and unaccustomed to the precautions and stratagems of land warfare, both men and officers spread carelessly over the town, in which defenceless condition the French suddenly returned and fell upon them, killing and wounding 122 of their numbers, and making prisoners the commanding officer and eighty-six others.

CHAP.  
IX.  
1810.

The fall of Tortosa was a deadly blow to the eastern provinces, it being the chief point of communication between them, and also the grand dépôt of their military resources. The Catalans were thenceforward debarred from all exterior aid, except such as might be disembarked on the coast; and to cut that off, General Suchet hastened to lay siege to Tarragona, their only remaining port.

## CHAPTER X.

*Affairs of Portugal—Marshal Massena continues to receive Reinforcements—remains stationary in his Cantonments—a French Force threatens the Alemtejo—Defensive Exertions of the Allies—a Reinforcement from England arrives at Lisbon—Marshal Massena retires—Sufferings of the French and Portuguese during the Invasion—Conduct of the Retreat and Pursuit—French attempt to halt behind the Coa—are attacked and driven into Spain—Almeida blockaded—Massena unites all the Force under his Command to raise the Blockade—is defeated in a general Action at Fuentes de Honor—retires beyond the Agueda—Garrison of Almeida evacuate the Place.*

CHAP. X. THE year 1811 opened with rather discouraging prospects on the side of Portugal. In addition to the intelligence of the re-inforcement which had entered the French cantonments, it became known that orders had been issued for all the disposable French troops in the South to march towards the Alemtejo frontier, which operated as a considerable diversion in Massena's favour, causing the Spanish division of La Romana to separate from the army in his front. General Gardanne also joined with his division, and, shortly afterwards, General Foy, having evaded the snares of the guerrillas and repelled the efforts of the militia to intercept his return,

1811.

23d Jan.

reached in person the French head-quarters, bringing with him a small reinforcement, and the Emperor's instructions for the further conduct of the campaign. Public expectation again fell into a state of painful anxiety. It was evident that the mighty Colossus was straining every nerve to redeem his pledge, and accomplish the expulsion of the British: except in the Peninsula, not a hostile battalion was arrayed in Europe, each nation remaining chained by its interests or fears in a confederacy hostile to England; and even throughout Spain an unusual calm prevailed, as if the attention of the whole world were engrossed on the result of this struggle.

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.

Marshal Massena, notwithstanding the reinforcements he had received, did not undertake any great movement; but keeping the main body of his army obstinately stationary in its cantonments, only sent out occasionally some weak predatory detachments; which conduct, it is now understood, was prescribed by orders from Paris. The determination to oblige Marshal Massena to remain in his exhausted cantonments, rather than change the theatre of war to more advantageous ground, although in consonance with the obstinate perseverance of Buonaparte's natural disposition, was, without doubt, much influenced by the general belief, that on the acceptance of the office of Regent


CHAP. by the Prince of Wales, a total change of men  
X. and measures would take place, and England,  
1811. of her own act, abandon her ally. Happily,  
however, on the eve of the day (4th February),  
which was expected to have witnessed this portentous change, the Prince wrote to Mr. Perceval that "it was not his intention to remove from their stations those whom the king had appointed his ministers," declaring that the impulse of filial duty and affection to his afflicted and beloved father led him to dread that any act of the Regent might in the smallest degree have the effect of interfering with the progress of his sovereign's recovery, and concluding with, "this consideration alone dictates the decision now communicated to Mr. Perceval." On the 12th of February, Parliament met, and the Regent in his opening speech, recommended effectual assistance being continued to the brave nations of the Peninsula; the address passed without an amendment, a few members only feeling it a duty to express their disapprobation of the lives of their countrymen and the resources of the kingdom being wasted in so unequal a contest; the army estimates were subsequently voted on a greater scale than those of the previous year, and England became equally pledged to save, as France to conquer, Portugal.

As the spring advanced the effects of the orders from Paris began to be felt, and attention

was much excited by the operations of a corps from the south of Spain under Marshal Soult, which had in a few weeks captured Olivença, annihilated the Spanish army on the Guadiana, and made such progress in the attack of Badajos as to threaten in a very short time to carry the war into the Alemtejo. The exertions to secure Lisbon on that side had been unceasing; the ruined castle of Almada had been modelled into a respectable fort, and the ground in its front, formed into a strong position, studded with redoubts of more than ordinary dimensions, and armed with heavy cannon. For the service of this formidable artillery, the Admiral held in readiness a competent number of seamen; militia were allotted for the garrisons of the works, and a body of regular troops for their support, so that no apprehensions were entertained for the safety of the capital on the Alemtejo side, and all thoughts were directed towards Estramadura.

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.

In that quarter the posts of the two armies had undergone no change since first arranged on the Rio-mayor, the French advance remaining entrenched at Santarem, and that of the allies occupying the village of Val; the hostile sentinels being only separated by the bridge at the western extremity of the long causeway across the marsh between the two places. Each stood unremittingly on the alert; the allies trusting to a mine ready for explosion

**CHAP.** under the principal arch of the bridge to prevent  
**X.** a sudden rush, and the French to the artillery of  
 a redoubt, constructed on a height enfilading  
**1811.** the whole length of the communication. On  
the other flank the troops were not in such im-  
mediate contact, the allies being entrenched at  
Alcoentre with a piquet of observation in the  
town of Rio-mayor, and the principal force of  
the French being at Alcanhede. In the middle  
of January, General Junot, with a party of dra-  
goons, made a reconnoissance from the latter  
place, and with heedless gallantry galloping fore-  
most into Rio-mayor, received a severe wound in  
the face from a rifle-serjeant who coolly waited  
his approach. This was almost the only act of  
hostility that passed between the two armies dur-  
ing the winter. The enemy's hopes of ultimate  
success, which could alone justify so long a state  
of wasting inactivity, were founded on a calcula-  
tion that the army in the South of Spain would  
effect its junction previously to the country being  
exhausted, and that their united strength would  
be sufficient to force the lines. All Massena's  
movements were evidently directed to that ob-  
ject. Punhete was carefully entrenched, to  
protect an establishment formed at the mouth  
of the Zezere for building boats and making  
cordage. Abrantes was reconnoitred, to ascer-  
tain if liable to be carried by a coup-de-main,  
and every other undertaking equally showed an



anxiety to establish a communication across the Tagus. CHAP.  
X.

1811.

The Allies, however, by placing a garrison in the castle of Tancos, establishing batteries to command the mouth of the Zezere, and lining the shore with piquets of observation, rendered it too hazardous an attempt for the army on the northern bank alone; and at the end of February, before Marshal Massena could reap any benefit from his perseverance, by the junction of Marshal Soult's forces, the resources of the country were nearly exhausted, and his troops, much reduced in number, had become very sickly and dispirited. The allies, on the contrary, had increased in confidence, and the long announced reinforcements from England were known to be hourly expected, and it was generally reported that Lord Wellington only awaited their arrival to commence offensive operations. Marshal Massena, therefore, with his army enclosed between rivers and mountains, could no longer temporize without the risk of its complete destruction, and he commenced his arrangements to withdraw, rather too unequivocally announcing his intentions by burning, on the 3d March, all his workshops, stores, and bridge apparatus at Punhete.

On the 4th of March, transports anchored in the Tagus with 7,000 troops on board, and the following night the French advanced corps withdrew from Santarem, to which place the allied French  
army re-  
tires;

CHAP. head-quarters were immediately transferred.—

X.

1811.

their loss.

See App.  
13.

The amount of the retiring force cannot be accurately stated, but judging from the appearance it made on its march, the infantry might be calculated at rather more than 40,000; stating it, however, as high as 45,000, that arm alone had sustained a loss of 27,000 men since it left Rodrigo. This prodigious mortality must, in great measure, be attributed to Marshal Massena having remained in his cantonments till absolute want preyed on every part of his army, and his troops were driven to subsist on such inadequate and unwholesome food, as generated a variety of diseases. These were rendered more fatal by the neglected and unprovided state of the hospitals, and by the want of an internal police, every town and village being encumbered with disgusting accumulations of dirt and filth.—The total abandonment of discipline, consequent on their peculiar situation, also added to their loss, the plea of providing subsistence being made an apology for every excess, and giving rise to conduct which could not be narrated without exciting suspicion of inaccuracy or malignant exaggeration.

The losses or sufferings of the French, however, were nothing in comparison with those their visitation inflicted on Portugal, and its inhabitants. Nearly 2,000 square miles of country remained for five months with scarcely an inha-

bitant; every thing it contained was devoured by the enemy, or destroyed by the season. In the space immediately bounding the positions of the two armies, not permanently occupied by either, the produce of the harvest perished, scattered over the ground, and the vintage mouldered on the stalk; flocks of innumerable small birds, (starlings) drawn to the spot by instinct, fattened unmolested on the ungathered grapes; and latterly, the very wolves, conscious of security, or rendered more daring by the absence of their accustomed prey, prowled about, masters of the territory, reluctantly giving way to the cavalry patrols which occasionally crossed their track.

CHAP.  
X.  
1811;


It was a gratifying though melancholy sight, to witness, on the advance of the French, the entire population of different provinces accompanying the marches of a retiring army, quitting their homes and sacrificing all their immoveable property for the general good—men, women and children, alike terrified, hurrying onward, and not knowing when or where to repose. Two hundred thousand of these fugitives found support and consolation in the hospitality and kindness of the citizens of Lisbon; but fifty thousand that fled to the left bank of the Tagus, long remained exposed to the weather, and a large proportion miserably perished from hunger and disease, before relief could be administered. Hard as their lot, it was far more happy than

CHAP. that of the villagers in the rear, and on the skirts  
X. of the enemy's cantonments, whose habitations,  
1811. plundered of every thing and occasionally occupied by detachments of French, afforded their owners no supplies, and only a precarious shelter. Many of these wretched creatures passed the whole season of winter exposed to its inclemencies in the neighbouring woods or mountains, subsisting merely on roots and herbs; and on the advance of the allies returned to their homes, their bodies emaciated from abstinence, and their intellects impaired by long continued apprehension: amongst them were girls of sixteen, who, become idiots, resembled in person women of fifty. Some children of both sexes, who had survived the severe trial, crawled to the road side as the army approached, to supplicate relief; appearing so thin, pale, and haggard, that many a hardened veteran was observed to turn from the sight with disgust as he compassionately bestowed on them a portion of the biscuit provided for his next day's support. Lest, however, the foregoing should be considered as an overcharged picture, drawn by the pencil of the suffering party, the following translated extracts from the work of a French officer, written expressly to vindicate the actions of Marshal Massena's legions, are added to correct the judgment.

“ From the period of the battle of Busaco,

the army subsisted entirely by marauding ; all the inhabitants fled on our approach, abandoning their homes and seeking shelter in the recesses of the mountains, or in the depth of the forests, where they carried their effects and their provisions : they drove their cattle along with them, and carefully secreted or buried every thing they could not remove. If by a rapid and unexpected march, they were prevented from constructing hiding places, they threw every thing that might prove useful to our army into the wells, ponds or rivers. This conduct had been directed by the English ; and the Regency at Lisbon, entirely devoted to Wellington, had denounced the punishment of death for disobedience. This plan faithfully executed, had the effect of obliging us after a little time, to evacuate the provinces where we intended to have remained permanently : it is true, however, that it ensured the devastation and ruin of the country for several years ; but the Portuguese, resolute and vindictive, cheerfully supported these sacrifices, knowing the cruel sufferings they must entail on us. Every where we found the mills destroyed ; the implements for baking broken ; the ovens pulled down, and we were under the constant necessity of constructing ourselves every utensil employed for preparing the food of man. However abundant and fertile a country may be, it is impossible that a foreign

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.

CHAP. X.  1811. army can long subsist in it when deprived of the services of the inhabitants. The articles of food are quickly consumed if the natives do not renew the productions of the soil. Land convoys can never be sufficient to supply a considerable army in a distant country; this observation applies *à fortiori* to the army of Portugal, which found itself cut off and distant from all resources, and which could not even receive convoys of ammunition to replace its expenditure in action. An attempt was made to send out regular foraging parties; but these detachments restrained by military discipline never brought back any thing, whilst soldiers who stole singly out of their camp or cantonments, and afterwards united into small bodies, invariably returned with mules or asses laden with flour, corn, bacon, hams, dried vegetables, or skins of wine. The several corps being ordered to forage for themselves, the system of sending out large regular foraging parties was given up, and independent detachments from each company were tolerated, notwithstanding the inconveniences attending it; every other method of victualling the army had been proved fruitless. Our marauders going across the country easily concealed themselves from the parties of Portuguese, who unceasingly harassed our troops on the great roads, and who always made us pay for our subsistence with the blood of some of

our comrades. In the beginning there was no egotism: those captains whose soldiers were most fortunate shared with the others, who in their turn repaid the favour. The sixth corps, which occupied Thomar, Santa Cruz, Ourem, &c. in second line, was much less distressed for provisions than the rest of the army: the villages were not so ruined as in the environs of Santarem, and the soldiers had less distance to go to find a country not plundered. Thus the sixth corps sometimes furnished provisions to the other troops who were less favourably cantoned. There was in every company one or more men of such an acute sense of perception, that no hiding place could escape their notice; in the houses, they pointed it out immediately on entering—in the fields, in the woods, or amongst the rocks, they discovered it at fifty paces distant. It will not, perhaps, be believed, but I have known in Portugal soldiers whose sense of smelling was so extremely acute, that they discovered the hiding places at so great a distance as to astonish those with them. I had in my company a man called Tabaco, who might have made a fortune by adopting the illusion of the divining ring; his talent was not in discovering springs, nor in pointing out where water was concealed; but he went about snorting and perceived where wine was buried: when he passed near a hiding place of that liquor, he

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.

CHAP.

X.

1811.

stopped short and was never wrong. In our circumstances the instinct of these gifted soldiers was highly prized by their comrades, they put themselves at the head of parties of marauders, and provided for their several companies every thing necessary for their support. The officers on their part directed the construction of ovens; they appointed butchers and bakers; they organized work shops for the tailors and shoemakers; they appointed millwrights to repair the damaged mills; and even in places where there never had been any, the soldiers contrived such as would work with a single ass or with the hand. The mill stones were formed from stones taken out of the churches, as none else could be found. These mills bore a great resemblance to those used in Brittany to grind rye. Thus our army, deprived of every thing essential to life, contrived substitutes: necessity is an able master. The plundering excursions which were at first very successful became every day less productive and more fatiguing. The country occupied by the army produced little wheat; we were quickly reduced to bread of maize and that was not found in sufficient quantity, many corps were on half or a third of a ration—some regiments lived altogether on vegetables or meat and had not always a sufficient supply. Wine, which was plentiful, having been wasted by the soldiers who found it, or consumed in camp with



thoughtless profusion, was also exhausted. It was in vain that our plunderers spread sixty or eighty miles in rear or on the flanks of the army; they brought back very little of any thing, sometimes even the whole of the stores they found were consumed on their march back to their cantonments. The different companies were always impatiently waiting their return, and in their anxiety men were placed on the watch along the road by which they were expected. If the excursion had been successful, the soldiers placed as videttes came running back to acquaint their comrades, and the joy of want satisfied beamed for a little while on every countenance; if the excursion had been unsuccessful every face lengthened, and all appeared cast down. It was at this time that every regiment began really to feel every kind of want. Some cattle were still found in wild places almost inaccessible—such as the darkest and thickest part of the forests, or behind enormous masses of rock, where man had never penetrated until this war, or in the depths of the most frightful precipices. There also were hid many fugitives whom fear and loneliness had rendered half savage; their long beards, their dishevelled hair, their countenances blacked by the fires they dare only light during the night, portrayed the apathy excited by extreme suffering. Many persons of distinction and priests, cut off

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.

CHAP. from Lisbon by the movements of our columns,  
X. were found sheltered in caves with the families  
1811. of the peasantry. In these crevices, to which

no roads conducted, these unfortunate creatures deemed themselves in safety with their goods ; but these natural redoubts, which ought to have protected them against the lawless rapacity of the soldiers, sharpened by want and fatigue, sometimes became their tombs. Women and young girls found in these savage abodes were obliged to submit to the most lawless passions to avoid instant death : with regret I speak it, they were frequently murdered by the tigers, whose brutal lust they had just satisfied. Those who committed these abominations were some wretches, outcasts of large cities, introduced into the army by the conscription. It was these scoundrels, who in their marauding, being free from all controul, blindly abandoned themselves to their natural ferocity. Such atrocious brigands, however, should not be confounded with our brave soldiers. The most cruel are invariably the most cowardly. In the crisis which our army now found itself, all repressive laws and regulations of police or discipline were neglected. Scarcely any delinquents were punished, but for military insubordination, and even on that head too great lenity was frequently shown. If now and then an example was made of a culprit, caught in the commission of a flagrant

crime, the police shortly afterwards relaxed, and vice again took its unchecked course. Such a pernicious system must undoubtedly have corrupted all our soldiers, for inflexible chains are required to keep large bodies in order. In the beginning the men often brought with them, without distinction of rank or quality, the young and pretty women whom they met with in their wanderings. Being obliged to put on such clothes as the soldiers found, the young peasant girls were sometimes attired in the dress of a countess, and the high born lady in those of a country girl. It was curious to observe the effect of this disagreement between their dress and rank in life. The captives were at first much dejected, but they easily became reconciled to a situation which at least preserved them from the sufferings and numerous dangers to which they were exposed amongst their wild rocks; they had each their protector who caused them to be respected by the others, and in general they became much attached to their protectors. Sometimes they ascended by degrees even to become the companions of the generals; such examples were not rare. One day being on the look out at Quinta de Sardina, near Leyria, a worthy veteran of my company brought me a pretty young girl with her mother, of a family well known and highly respected in Portugal: their clothes dirty, but of rich stuff, were much torn and disordered,

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.

CHAP. and their tears and sighs showed the most lively  
X. grief. My worthy soldier had just released  
1811. them from a band of marauders at the very moment that extreme youth alone was preserving the daughter from undergoing the same ignominious treatment as the mother. The most respectful attention which I lavished on them for some days not stopping their tears, I took upon myself to have them conducted several leagues beyond the outposts by the worthy voltigeur who had before saved them. A singular circumstance attending this war, of which no mention has been made, is, that laxity of manners was carried so far as to sell women. They were also exchanged for chevaux de main. I have seen a game of cards played, the stakes being a young girl against an article of luxury. Indeed I was myself pressed by a conductor of provisions to cede to him for two doubloons a woman who had taken refuge in a village where I commanded. So many hiding places had been discovered that no more remained, or at least those which did remain were constructed with so much art as not to be found out. The skill which our men had acquired by practice was every day more and more baffled, and famine augmented hourly to a frightful degree. Want was so pressing as to render our soldiers hard hearted and cruel; excited by hunger, they even proceeded to torture the obstinate inhabi-

tants whom they chanced to seize within reach of the deserted villages to make them confess what hiding places they knew. These acts of unheard of cruelty were attended with success, and for some time the whole army subsisted on provisions obtained by means of the rack. Soldiers who had previously evinced some generous feelings now recounted these abominations with sang froid. Should history at any time make mention of these atrocities, let her not omit to state that only this last means remained to prevent the army of Portugal, commanded by the Prince of Essling, from perishing in the agony of want."

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.

Marshal Massena retired through Estramadura by the road he entered it, detaching a corps of about 7000 men, under General Reynier, along the foot of the Serra de Estrella to Espinhal. As a preliminary measure, and to gain time for the retreat of his sick and baggage, he united the remainder of his army at Pombal, with the apparent intention of maintaining his ground. Lord Wellington, however, decided to remove him far distant from the corps in the south, and on the 11th, having brought up his army and driven in all the enemy's advanced posts, made his dispositions for a general attack on the following morning; but during the night Massena, having previously set fire to the town, drew off. The next day the allies were opposed by a body

Retreat of  
Marshal  
Massena—

concentrates his  
army.

Affair at  
Redinha.

CHAP. of the enemy strongly posted at the entry of the  
 X. defile in front of Redinha, and to dislodge it the  
 1811. greater part of the army was formed in two  
 lines in its front, whilst detachments turned its  
 flanks, which arrangements occupied some hours.

12th Mar. The corps thus left as a rear guard remained  
 firm, obstinately skirmishing with its light troops  
 and making much use of its artillery, till it  
 found its safety compromised : then abandoning  
 its position, it retired at a very quick rate, losing  
 but few men, as, without attending to order, it  
 rapidly fell back on its friends ; whilst the lead-  
 ing divisions of the allies were obliged to follow  
 with precaution, not knowing the moment when  
 they might be opposed by the whole French  
 army.

In this manner, Massena daily covered his  
 retreat with a corps of 10,000 infantry and the  
 best of his cavalry, without any other incum-  
 brances than a few light guns well horsed.  
 This rear guard was invariably posted on posi-  
 tions not to be attacked in front without a very  
 severe loss, and which could only be turned by  
 a march of many hours, rendering the troops  
 incapable of further exertion. During the time  
 thus gained, the sick and baggage, followed by  
 the main body, were retiring, and most frequently  
 completed their day's march before the rear guard  
 was forced back upon them.

The two divisions of the 9th corps d'armée

under General Drouet preceded the march of the French army from Pombal with permission to return into Spain by the left of the Mondego, and Marshal Massena purposing to cross that river by the bridge of Coimbra with the remainder of his troops, detached at the same time General Montbrun with a strong force of cavalry and some light guns to summon the town. When, however, his main body reached Condeixa, eight miles from Coimbra, on the 13th, he found himself so closely pressed by the allies, that being ignorant of the amount of the force which might be opposed to him in the city, he feared to commit his army by a further advance, and halted to ascertain the success of the reconnoissance he had pushed forward. To the allies it was of the utmost importance that the French should not gain possession of the strong and unexhausted country beyond the Mondego, and a few militia only being on the right bank to oppose them, a corps from the pursuing force was dispatched over the mountains to the eastward, to occupy the passes and alarm them for that flank. This manœuvre had the desired effect, as Massena, fearing to have both communications closed on him, made a sudden and rapid move with his whole army into the road between the Serra de Estrella and the Mondego, leaving General Montbrun to his own exertions, and even burning the

CHAP. X.  
1811.

13th Mar.

CHAP. town of Condeixa to impede the pursuit. The  
 X. rear corps was nevertheless most closely pressed  
 1811. till night-fall, when it halted in a strong position  
 at Casal-nova, which being beyond the point  
 where the roads from Ancião and Miranda do  
 Corvo unite, Marshal Massena, who had fixed  
 his personal head quarters at Fonte Cuberta,  
 was obliged to scramble over the mountains in  
 the dark to regain his troops.\* He then gave  
 orders for the destruction of the greater part of  
 the wheel carriages with the rear division and  
 that the remainder should march all night.

14th Mar. At day-break the attack recommenced, and  
 after some sharp skirmishing the French with-  
 drew from the heights above Casal-nova to a  
 parallel ridge where they again stood firm till  
 turned on both flanks. Indeed, on this line,  
 the direction of the rivers and of the ravines,  
 constantly opposing an extended and difficult  
 front to the pursuers, was particularly favour-  
 able to their mode of covering their retreat:  
 Marshal Ney, in command of the rear-guard,  
 availed himself with great ability of these natural  
 advantages, retiring by echellons of divisions,

\* It is understood that Marshal Massena sent three positive orders to Marshal Ney (the last by the chief of the staff, General Fririon) to make an effort to regain the point of union of the two roads to favour his personal junction with the rear-guard; but that the latter obstinately refused to do so, without assigning any reason for his disobedience.



and maintaining a continued action throughout the day with a view to cover Miranda do Corvo till night-fall, as the main body of the French army had halted there in position behind the Deuça to obtain some repose; a very considerable force being posted on the Sugar Loaf Hill on the south of the town, and the remainder of the troops, to the number of 25 or 30,000, being in large masses in the bottom.

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.  
14th Mar.

At this point General Reynier's corps marching by Espinhal connected its movements with those of the main body, and General Montbrun with the cavalry also rejoined the army. The latter officer from Cruz dos Moriscoes sent forward a flag of truce to Coimbra, promising the most favourable treatment to the city should the bridge be delivered to him uninjured; but the Portuguese officer charged with exploding the mine referring him to the commander of a corps of militia twelve miles in the rear, so much time was consumed that during the negociation General Montbrun became apprized of the flank movement of Massena from Condeixa and of his own critical situation. In consequence of this intelligence he immediately destroyed all his incumbrances, and marching on Sorge, gained Miranda by the mountain road on the left of the river.

In the afternoon, whilst the skirmishing was maintained very briskly with the rear-guard, a

CHAP. column of the allies, joined by the division which  
 X. had followed Reynier's corps, turned the Deuça  
 1811. by Penela, and approached the French left flank  
 on Nossa Senhora da Monte: its appearance was  
 the signal for a vigorous attack of the rear-  
 guard, which was rapidly pushed back, with  
 considerable loss, on the French main body, pro-  
 ducing an instantaneous movement of their  
 whole force into the defile; which a destructive  
 fire of grape shot from the front so precipitated,  
 that they destroyed many waggons and stores,  
 and to prevent an immediate pursuit, set fire to  
 the town which occupies the entry of the defile.

15th Mar. The following morning a dense fog delayed  
 the march of the allies till eleven o'clock, and  
 gave time for the retiring force, which had  
 marched all night, to clear the defile; neverthe-  
 less, towards evening it was so much pressed,  
 that at the passage of the Ceira, to secure the  
 safety of the main body, Marshal Ney was com-  
 pelled to sustain an action with his rear-guard on  
 the left of the river, in a less favourable position  
 than it usually occupied; it was vigorously at-  
 tacked a little before dusk, and being rapidly  
 pushed back on the bridge, many were trampled  
 on, others drowned, and such a panic seized the  
 French divisions on the right bank, that they  
 fired on each other, and the confusion became  
 so great as to threaten the most serious evil; in  
 consequence, Marshal Ney ordered all his re-

Affair at  
 Foz de  
 Arouce.

maining baggage and incumbrances to be destroyed, and as soon as it became dark, having blown up the bridge, retired, and marching without the smallest halt, passed every thing over the Alva during the night. The French being now driven completely within the defiles, a division of infantry and a brigade of heavy cavalry were detached from the pursuing force to strengthen the corps in the Alemtejo, a measure become urgently necessary, in consequence of the surrender of Badajos. To supply their place the army halted during the day to close up the rear divisions, head-quarters being at Lousao.

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.

16th Mar.

On the morning of the 17th the allies forded the Ceira near the bridge, and about a mile above it; but so much preparation was necessary and such wide movements were required to turn the formidable line of the Alva, over which river the French had destroyed the bridges, that no affair of any importance took place during the day.

Allies pass  
the Ceira;  
17th.

On the 18th the retiring army being placed in position on the bold and lofty mountains bounding the right of the Alva, Junot's corps at Cortiçada and Moita, Ney's above the Ponte de Murcella, and Reynier's in the direction of Maceira, felt so secure from interruption, that a general foraging was ordered: at break of day, however, two divisions of the allies had been put in movement to ford the river near Pombeiro, in order to turn their left flank, and on

also the  
Alva.  
18th.

CHAP. their having sufficiently advanced for that purpose, the allied main body made a front movement on Ponte de Murcella. The French for some time firmly disputed the passage, and a heavy cannonade was maintained on both sides, till Massena learned that the column from Pombeiro would soon be in a situation to interrupt his communication with Celorico, on which he instantly withdrew, and marched with all speed throughout the night to gain Maceira. The greater part of the allied army forded the river the same evening, and bivouacked on the heights beyond Pombeiro, head-quarters being in the town. In consequence of this sudden and unexpected abandonment of their position by the French army, many of the foragers during the night brought the fruits of their labour into the bivouacs of the allies, and many officers and men quartered in the villages on the flanks, unacquainted with the event, were, to their great astonishment, made prisoners in the morning. Marshal Massena having been thus quickly manœuvred out of the strongest position on his line of retreat, could entertain no hope of halting any where for a single day, he therefore destroyed much ammunition and many stores to accelerate his retreat; but at this moment, when the French were most pressed, and every prospect appeared of obliging them to abandon their artillery, the allies, having out-marched their supplies, were necessitated to relax in their exertions.

In any poor or nearly exhausted country, the privations endured by a retiring force are light, compared with the absolute want to which their pursuers are exposed: along this thinly peopled and rocky track, the stores of the inhabitants, though they had escaped with little previous pillage, barely admitted of the passage of the French; not an article which could contribute to support life evaded their anxious search, and subsistence was no where left for the smallest corps to hang on their rear. The Portuguese troops, whose commissariat at this period trusted altogether to what they could purchase on the spot with valueless bills on an empty treasury, or the battalions seize by force, were absolutely famishing, and to enable them to move on, it became necessary to share with them the little provided for the British. In consequence, on the 19th, a general halt was made on the right of the Alva, head-quarters being at Argonil, to give time for the arrival of forage and provisions from the rear, during which delay the retiring force made such progress as to reach Celorico without further molestation.

CHAP. ·  
X.  
1811.

21st Mar.

Marshal Massena might from Celorico have readily gained Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo,\*

\* Such was the advice he received from Marshal Ney, who was so impressed with the necessity of the army moving on Almeida, that he broke through military subordination and put his own corps in march on that road, in direct opposition to the

CHAP. but unwilling to quit Portugal, he merely filed  
 X. his sick and other incumbrances in that direc-  
 1811. tion, and with his main body moved to his right  
 23d Mar. and took post on the hills round Guarda, in-

tending to remain there and connect his opera-  
 tions with those of the French troops on the  
 Alemtejo frontier. In that town, situated on  
 the summit of a steep and isolated mountain,  
 the French officers, considering the pursuit at an  
 end, relaxed in their accustomed vigilance. On  
 the morning of the 29th March, strong columns  
 of the allies had nearly ascended the mountain,  
 and others were penetrating beyond its flanks  
 before they discovered the meditated attack ;  
 they then hastily retired down the back of the  
 mountain, and were closely pursued to the Coa.

French  
 driven from  
 Guarda.

Affair at  
 Sabugal.  
 3d April.

General Reynier halted till the 3d of April  
 with his corps behind that river where it makes  
 a considerable elbow near Sabugal, which confi-  
 dence had nearly caused its entire destruction.  
 Lord Wellington directed the light division to  
 cross the Coa at a ford two or three miles above  
 the town and manœuvre in his rear, whilst two  
 divisions should attack him in front. The day  
 being very rainy, and a passing mist occasionally  
 obscuring every object, the light division failed


orders delivered him by the chief of the staff: in consequence  
 Marshal Massena deprived him of his command and sent him  
 to Paris.

in making a sufficiently wide movement; and became engaged with the flank of the enemy before the divisions destined to attack them in front could take part in the combat. A battalion of the Rifle Corps formed the advance, which the French cavalry charged, and would have completely cut up, had not Colonel Beckwith their commander, with great promptitude availed himself of the defence afforded by a square stone inclosure, into which he threw his men, and repelled the efforts of Reynier's whole corps till the remainder of the division came to his aid. Then the struggle became more equal, and was maintained with spirit on both sides, till the divisions in front appeared through the mist close to the combatants and immediately began to take part in the action, on which Reynier, perceiving that he was nearly surrounded, retired as fast as the individuals composing his force could move, leaving a howitzer, and 340 men dead on the field, and losing, before he reached Alfaiates, about an equal number made prisoners.

CHAP. X.  
1811.

After this lesson the French hastened to concentrate behind the Agueda, and the Allies pushed forward to cut off their communication with Almeida. In the performance of this duty, the cavalry, with two troops of horse-artillery, fell unexpectedly on a brigade of French infantry at Junça, the commander of which displayed the greatest coolness and bravery; he formed his men into a square, which, though galloped round by the cavalry, and

7th April.

CHAP. X.  1811. apparently overwhelmed by rapid discharges of the artillery, continued slowly to retire across the open country till it reached the Duas Casas, even carrying off a superior officer, severely wounded, whose sufferings caused a retardment of its march. This gallant conduct formed a worthy conclusion to a retreat conducted throughout with much ability and occasional great boldness, which, favoured by various causes that restrained the direct attacks of the pursuing force, saved the French army from any overwhelming disaster, its loss, by the sword or prisoners, probably not exceeding 5,000 men; that of the Allies being under 650.

The behaviour of the French troops in all other respects deserves a very different mention. From the moment that the decision to retire was formed, they acted upon a system of wanton and unjustifiable devastation. The soldiers, at their will and caprice, set fire to the houses in which they lodged, and destroyed every thing of value not combustible, whilst the officers bore their part on a more extended scale; the town of Leyria, with the bishop's palace, was consumed by an organized conflagration, and the magnificent convent of Alcobaça was first defaced and then delivered over to the flames by an order from head-quarters. The soldiery, authorized and encouraged in their excesses, spared neither the matchless ornaments of that building, nor the unrivalled sculpture of Batalha, breaking open the royal tombs, and scattering in the air the



ashes of a long line of kings and princes; then mingling with their ferocity a high degree of indecent buffoonery, they dexterously united into complete skeletons the bones of different individuals of both sexes, and leaving them in ridiculous postures, contrived, by the same act, to insult the memory of the dead and outrage the feelings of the living.

It has been ascertained that above 400,000 Portuguese perished by disease or famine during the winter of 1810—1811; and the further immense loss sustained by Portugal in this invasion may be in some degree imagined, when it is stated that in whole provinces neither a living animal, nor an article of subsistence, was to be found at the departure of the French; and that the description they applied to their line of march when advancing, became latterly, with the exception of the running wine, applicable to all the country over which they had spread.—“The towns and villages deserted, the mills destroyed the wine running in the gutters, the corn stacks burnt, even the very furniture broken; neither a horse, nor a mule, nor an ass, nor a cow—not even a goat to be seen.”

Moniteur.

The provinces thus rendered a desert must long have languished under poverty and distress, had not the British Parliament immediately voted one hundred thousand pounds for their relief, and private benevolence nearly doubled the grant. These sums, judiciously expended by competent authorities, provided cattle, seed corn, and implements

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.

CHAP.  
X.

1811.

of husbandry, placing the farmer in a state to exert his industry; the succeeding autumn, cultivation recommenced on an extended scale, and in a few seasons the only apparent traces of the invasion were the ruined villages, mansions, and religious edifices, many of which, not to be restored without prodigious cost and labour, will probably ever remain melancholy remembrancers of the excesses of the French armies under the Imperial sway.

Almeida  
blockaded.  
9th April.

On the 9th of April, head-quarters were fixed at Villa-Formosa; Almeida was the same day reconnoitred, and being found amply garrisoned, and beyond a coup-de-main, and there being neither battering artillery nor siege-stores at command, it was blockaded, and the army cantoned in the villages in advance. The disorganized and wretched state of Massena's army rendering it improbable that any great movement should be immediately made for its relief, Lord Wellington took the opportunity of inaction to visit that part of his army acting on the Alemtejo frontier. His return, however, was demanded before the end of the month, as the most strenuous exertions having been made to reorganize the French army, and the remaining two divisions of the ninth corps, with a body of cavalry and artillery of the Imperial Guard under Marshal Bessières, being united with it, Massena again mustered 40,000 effective infantry and 5,000 cavalry. With that force he crossed the frontier on the 2d May, escorting a convoy of stores and

provisions, to revictual Almeida; and Lord Wellington, whose army, 34,000 infantry and 2000 cavalry, was cantoned on the Azava, immediately concentrated it, to give battle and oppose the entry of the supplies.

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.

Almeida is situated on the right of the Coa, a considerable river, running in a northerly direction, the banks of which are steep and mountainous, having but few communications across them. The principal are by the bridge of Almeida, by the bridge of Castelloboim seven miles above Almeida, and at the ford of St. Roque near Freneda three miles higher up the stream, beyond which point none of any military importance occur till near Sabugal, thirty miles above Almeida. At Sabugal there is a good stone bridge, forming the great communication into Spain from Guarda and Castello-Branco.

Battle of  
Fuentes de  
Honor.  
3d May.

Almeida being on the enemy's side of the Coa, the Allies, to oppose a force coming to its relief, were obliged to engage with that river in their rear. To ensure the object for which they were about to fight, their left must of necessity be posted so near to the blockaded fortress as to prevent any communication with the garrison round that flank; and the bridge at Sabugal being the only spot at which, in case of disaster, the army could with convenience recross the river, it was judged advisable that the right should be sufficiently extended, to keep open the communication with it also. Thus the protection of two extremely distant points was

CHAP. to be provided for in the formation of the army,  
 X.  
 requiring a front much beyond what its numbers  
 1811. would properly cover.

In front of the Coa, in nearly a parallel direction, runs a small river, called the Duas Casas, the ground between the two rivers, though high, being in general open. The village of Fuentes de Honor is built on the left bank of the Duas Casas, which is, at that point and below it, a very strong feature; but above the village, the head of the valley gradually wears itself out, and its banks rise in easy slopes.

Lord Wellington selected for his field of battle the high ground behind the Duas Casas, placing the divisions of Generals Spencer, Picton, and Houston, in rear of Fuentes de Honor, and strongly occupying that village with their light infantry under Lieutenant-Colonel Williams. In the same line, on the left, but a little detached, were Generals Crauford's and Campbell's divisions, opposite to the village of Alameda, where there is a bridge over the Duas Casas. Sir W. Erskine's division was posted on the extreme left, to guard the great road to Almeida, which crosses the river by a ford under Fort Concepcion; and a Portuguese brigade, with a British battalion under General Pack, closely invested the fortress. A body of Guerrilla cavalry commanded by Don Julian was placed in the village of Nava de Aver, two miles beyond the right of the army, for the further security of that flank.

On the 3d May, the enemy, having parked their

convoy at Gallegos, took post on the opposite side of the valley of the Duas Casas, their left being in front of the village of Fuentes de Honor, and their right extending about two miles and a half to Alameda. At first they threatened to attack from the latter point; but in the afternoon made a sudden and desperate effort to carry the village of Fuentes, the possession of which would have enabled them to pierce through the front of the allies. That post was consequently disputed with the greatest obstinacy, and the contention in the streets became particularly close and murderous; but reinforcements judiciously poured in by both parties supplied their respective losses till night, when the assailants, after the failure of a most vigorous effort, gladly availed themselves of the dark to desist from the contest.

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.

Marshal Massena, having been thus foiled in the endeavour to break through the front of the allies, passed the following day in reconnoitring, which giving cause to anticipate an effort to turn the right, General Houston's division was in the afternoon marched to the heights on that flank in rear of Pozo-Velho. The next morning it was observed that the French army had made a general movement to their left, and that Junot's corps, with all the cavalry, had assembled in front of Pozo-Velho. This change led to a corresponding movement of the allies; General Crauford's division, the cavalry and a troop of horse artillery being

4th May.

CHAP. ordered to the support of General Houston, and  
X. Generals Spencer's and Picton's divisions being  
1811. moved a little to their right.

5th May.

Soon after day-light, General Junot's corps attacked and carried the village of Pozo-Velho, occupied by two battalions, the advance of General Houston's division: the defenders fell back in good order to the heights, where the division was posted, having a body of dragoons and a troop of horse artillery on their right flank.—Shortly afterwards a party of French cavalry made a sudden and most daring charge from that quarter, driving the dragoons through the guns and beyond the infantry; but the effort being unsupported it was speedily repulsed and the division remained on the heights, till it was perceived that the enemy's numerous squadrons were filing through the woods and collecting on their right flank, whilst their infantry was forming to attack them in front. Lord Wellington, who was on the spot, then decided to give up his communication with the bridge at Sabugal, and strengthen his position by concentrating his force. With that view, Generals Spencer's and Picton's divisions with Colonel Ashworth's brigade were directed to form in two lines from the *Duas Casas* to the *Turon*, perpendicularly to their original formation, and General Houston's division to take post on the remarkable isolated knoll on the left of the latter river, which commands the whole plain in the direction of *Freneda*; the light division

and cavalry being directed to form in reserve in rear of the line. The Guerrilla cavalry in Nava-de-Aver, separated from the allies by the loss of Pozo-Velho, having made a detour to Freneda, were detached to act in rear of the right of the enemy.

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.

The French mistook this change of position for a general retreat, and confidently pushed forward. General Montbrun with the cavalry and a well mounted artillery closely pressed the troops moving from the right, which nevertheless steadily retired for above two miles by squares, alternately covering each other and repelling every effort to break them. Amidst this general gallant conduct, the Chasseurs Britanniques, under Colonel Eustace, were remarked for the cool intrepidity with which they repulsed a most furious charge, and the horse-artillery under Captain Bull for the unrivalled activity and boldness they displayed throughout the whole movement. Thus hardly pressed, but in perfect order, the retiring force at length reached the other troops. The cavalry in passing through the intervals of the new alignement created some confusion, and the Guards were at the moment changing their front, seeing which Montbrun ordered a general charge: for the support of the retiring force, a brigade of guns had been placed in a flanking position on either side of their line of march, and as soon as the dragoons had passed to the rear, the horse-artillery formed up between the brigades, and all eighteen pieces joined in a most powerful

CHAP. fire on the French cavalry whilst in the act of  
X. charging : the infantry, on the close approach of  
1811. the assailants, added some well directed volleys of  
musquetry, which altogether caused such havoc,  
as to throw them into complete disorder, and induce  
General Montbrun to draw off, leaving above 500  
horses dead or disabled on the spot.

On other points the French made many similarly bold but futile attempts to break the troops whilst in march ; but so soon as the last of the columns had deployed on the new alignment and they discovered the object of the movement, they confined their exertions to a heavy fire of artillery and to some charges of cavalry on the out-piquets. On the original front, they redoubled their efforts against the village of Fuentes, in the defence of which the light troops were now supported by a brigade of the line : the whole of the 6th corps being formed in column in front of the village, on a signal, the leading battalions gallantly crossed the stream, and after a sharp struggle dislodged the defenders. So soon, however, as the assailants attempted to form beyond the houses, the allied artillery opened upon them a most destructive fire, under which Colonel Mackinnon's brigade gallantly charged, drove them back and pursued them with the bayonet through the village. The French, in their turn, sent forward fresh troops, and the contest was renewed in the streets with the same obstinacy as on the preceding day, till several of the



openings were literally blocked up with the dead and wounded:—the bold efforts of the assailants were however surpassed by the steady resolution of the defenders; and after a desperate struggle, maintained without intermission till dark, the allies were left in quiet possession of the upper part of the town, the French occupying the lower streets.

CHAP.  
X.  
1811.

This was the expiring effort of Marshal Massena's command: foiled in every attempt, he feared to hazard a fresh attack; and secretly sending orders to the governor of Almeida to evacuate the place, remained quiet till the 7th in presence of his antagonist, who availed himself of the opportunity to intrench his new front, and render his position most formidable on the side where two days previously it had been the weakest. Massena then, seeing all chance vanish of renewing the combat with success, and having ascertained from a preconcerted signal, made by the artillery of the fortress, that his instructions had been received, retired his troops along the Agueda, to cover the escape of the garrison, and immediately afterwards resigned the command of the army to Marshal Marmont, who had been sent from Paris as his successor. In this struggle, the allies lost 198 killed, 1028 wounded, and 294 made prisoners; the loss of the French is unknown, further than that 400 of their dead were numbered in the streets of Fuentes de Honor.

9th May.

Lord Wellington made instant arrangements to secure the reward of his victory, and having in-

10th May.

CHAP. dubitable information that General Brenier intended to sally out with the garrison of Almeida, besides sending two divisions to resume the blockade, ordered a brigade to take post on the high road to Rodrigo, and a regiment to occupy Barba del Puerco.

X.  
1811.

Garrison  
evacuate  
Almeida.

10th May.

Thus, both parties being fully prepared, General Brenier, on the night of the 10th, at the moment when the explosion of a number of fougaces blew down the revêtement of two fronts, sallied out with his garrison, surprising and bayoneting the nearest piquet of the investing corps, which enabled him to pass through the troops before they could assemble to oppose him, and to gain a considerable distance before they followed: the other piquets, however, led by General Pack, closely hung upon his rear, keeping up a constant fire of musketry to warn the divisions in which direction to follow. General Brenier passed in the dark through the posts of the brigade on the high road, and was proceeding direct to Barba del Puerco, when he stumbled upon a regiment of cavalry in their quarters, the whole of which he might probably have taken prisoners; but knowing if he were delayed only a very short time, his pursuers would come up with him, he struck into a circuitous route across the country, still followed and fired upon by the piquets. The commander of the regiment at Barba del Puerco, hearing the firing take a direction distant from his post, judged that the fu-

gitives were marching on some other point, and moved to a ford higher up the Agueda. In the meanwhile the garrison reached Barba del Pu-  
 erco whilst unoccupied, but the difficulty of the descent, and the detour they had made, admitted of the divisions of the blockade falling on their rear just as daylight commenced, and some hundreds were killed, or made prisoners. Having passed the river, no further effort could be made against the evading force, as the whole of General Reynier's corps was on the right bank in readiness to support them.

CHAP.  
 X.  
 1811.  
 11th May.

The victory at Fuentes, and the fall of Almeida, having ensured the safety of the north of Portugal, Lord Wellington detached Generals Picton's and Houston's divisions to the Alentejo, to reinforce Marshal Beresford; and being informed on the 16th that the enemy were in movement in that quarter, his lordship in person set out by forced journies, leaving the troops in the north under the command of Sir B. Spencer.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Military Operations on the Alemtejo Frontier, in furtherance of the Conquest of Portugal—Marshal Soult takes Olivença—invests Badajos—disperses Mendizabal's Army—Surrender of Badajos—Battle of Barrosa—Marshal Mortier reduces Campo-mayor—Marshal Beresford forces the French to recross the Guadiana—retakes Olivença and besieges Badajos—Sout advances with an Army to its Relief—is defeated at Albuera—Second Siege of Badajos—French Armies of the North and South unite for its Relief—The Allies retire into Portugal—offer Battle on the Caya—French Armies separate—Lord Wellington moves to the Agueda.*

CHAP. THE 5th corps d'armée, under Marshal Mortier,  
 XI. remained threatening the Alemtejo frontier till  
 1811. the allies were forced back on Lisbon, when, such a demonstration being no longer of any utility, it returned to Seville. Soon afterwards, on orders from Paris to Marshal Soult to co-operate vigorously in the conquest of Portugal, he joined a train of battering artillery and a considerable body of cavalry to Mortier's corps, with which, in person, he moved forward at the commencement of the year to reduce Badajos, and open a communication across the Tagus with Marshal Massena. Generals Balasteros and Mendizabal, who commanded the Spanish

armies in Estremadura, being unequal to oppose his force, retired on its approach; the former to Salvatierra and the lower parts of the Guadiana, the latter into Portugal; but unaccountably leaving in Olivença seven battalions and a brigade of field-artillery, with scarcely any provisions. The French blockaded the place on the 11th January, and on the 22d famine caused its surrender at discretion.

CHAP.  
XI.  
1811.

Marshal  
Soutt takes  
Olivença—  
22d Jan.

Marshal Soutt having made Olivença a place of arms in support of his further operations, detached Marshal Mortier on the 26th January to invest Badajos, which was the same day shut up on the left of the Guadiana by the infantry, and a partial interruption given to its communications with Portugal by the cavalry, which forded the river. Two days afterwards the siege commenced, and on the 11th February the first batteries opened. The same evening the Pardaleras crown-work was stormed by parties advancing from the trenches, and carried with scarcely any opposition; but from the rockiness of the ground it was several days before the assailants could form a secure lodgment.

invests Ba-  
dajos.  
26th Jan.

At this period a considerable Spanish force came to the assistance of the besieged. The moment it was known at Cartaxo that Soutt was in movement, Lord Wellington arranged a plan of operations with the Marquis de la Romana for the defence of the southern frontier,

**CHAP.** and pointed out a position behind the Gevora,  
**XI.** having its right on Fort Christoval, as the best  
1811. situation for the Spaniards to keep open a communication with Badajos, should that fortress be attacked. The Spanish troops had already separated from the British, and the Marquis de la Romana had named the following day for his departure to join them, when on the 23d January he suddenly expired at Cartaxo, from an ossification of the vessels of the heart, universally regretted by his countrymen and their allies. The command in consequence devolved on General Mendizabal, who followed the plan laid down, and on the 9th February, opening a communication with the garrison, posted his army on the Christoval heights; in which situation he kept the besiegers in a constant state of alarm, and it became an object of primary importance to dislodge him. Unhappily he gave the opportunity, by moving his whole force to its left, out of the protection of Fort Christoval, on account of a few howitzer shells thrown into his camp from the opposite bank of the river. This being observed by Marshal Mortier, he established a flying bridge upon the Guadiana above the town, and in the night of the 18th February crossed over a detachment of 6000 men from the besieging army, which forded the Gevora, and at daylight commenced the attack. The force opposed to them con-

Death of  
La Romana.

sisted of 9000 Spanish infantry and a brigade of Portuguese cavalry; the troops of both nations behaved ill, and deriving little advantage from position were quickly routed. The cavalry ensured safety by an immediate flight, notwithstanding the gallant conduct of their commanding and other officers, who were conspicuous in their exertions to rally them. Don Carlos de España succeeded in retiring 500 of the infantry to Elvas, about 3000 escaped into Badajos, and the remainder were killed or made prisoners.

CHAP.  
XI.  
1811.

Spaniards  
defeated on  
the Gevova.

Marshal Mortier being thus relieved from the inquietude of the army in the field, invested the place all round and used every exertion to press forward the siege. The French, after securing themselves in the Pardaleras, struck out a parallel to the right and left and threw up enfilading batteries against the works of the town: soon after they opened, the governor Menacho was killed in the covered-way by a cannon shot and was succeeded in the command by General Imaz: from that moment a culpable remissness seems to have prevailed amongst the defenders, as when the approaches were still twenty yards distant from the salients of the covered-way, it was accidentally discovered on the 28th, by the bold advance of an officer, that the garrison withdrew the guard from it in the night; in consequence, on the next evening, the crest of the glacis was crowned by the flying sap with-

CHAP. out resistance. On the night of the 8th March,  
 XI. the counterscarp of the ditch of the ravelin was  
 1811. blown in, and the ravelin itself being abandoned  
 by the garrison, was gained without a struggle.  
 On the 9th, the breaching battery opened; and  
 on the 10th, the governor capitulated, although  
 previously informed by a telegraphic communi-  
 cation that Massena had commenced his re-  
 treat and that he should be immediately re-  
 lieved. The following day the garrison, 9000  
 in number, after several hours labour to render  
 the breach sufficiently wide and easy, marched  
 out through the opening and laid down their  
 arms to 13,000 French.

Badajos ca-  
 pitulates.

A well judged attempt was made by the  
 allied forces at Cadiz, at the commencement of  
 March, to raise the blockade of that place,  
 destroy the French works in front of the island  
 of Leon, and draw Soult from his operations  
 before Badajos. The enterprise seemed certain  
 of success, as the French troops in the lines did  
 not exceed ten or twelve thousand, whilst the  
 army in the island mustered nearly twenty  
 thousand; and to remove all impediment to a  
 well combined exertion, General Graham had  
 consented to act under the orders of the Spanish  
 General La Pena.

Battle of  
 Barrosa.

It was arranged that the force to be employed  
 should be conveyed in transports to Tarifa, from  
 whence it should march on the flank of the



French and be joined by General Zayas, with the remnant of the garrison of Cadiz, by a bridge which he was directed to throw across the San Pedro channel, near its junction with the ocean. A heavy gale forced the transports into Algeiras Bay, from whence there is no road practicable for artillery; but, by the prodigious exertions of the sailors, the guns being transhipped into launches, were towed against the wind and current to Tarifa, where between 4 and 5000 British, and nearly 12,000 Spaniards assembled, and on the 4th March reached Veger. There, in a conference between the two generals, it was planned that the Spaniards leading the van should march to Conil; that the English, closing the rear, should unite with them at that town during the night; and that, after some repose, their combined forces should attack the French on the following day, when General Zayas, with the troops remaining in the island, should sally out, and parties of seamen and marines from the squadron be disembarked to destroy the batteries round the harbour. The Commander in Chief, on arriving at the agreed point, having ascertained that Zayas had succeeded in throwing a bridge over the San Pedro river on the 2d, and had repulsed a bold attempt of the enemy to gain possession of it, ordered the advance of the Spanish division under General Lardizabal to attack the intervening French posts and open

CHAP.  
 XI.  
 1811.

CHAP. a communication with the island. This pri-  
XI. mary object of the expedition was brilliantly  
1811. executed. The enemy, after some resistance,  
were forced to withdraw, and La Pena moved  
the main body of the Spaniards to the heights  
of Bermeja, where he took post to secure the  
advantage he had gained and cover the junction  
of the troops from the island.

These movements La Pena communicated to  
Sir Thomas Graham, and requested him im-  
mediately to advance to his support. The dispatch  
was received at Barrosa, on the morning of the  
5th, at the conclusion of a march of sixteen  
hours, when the troops were nearly exhausted  
with fatigue; Sir Thomas, nevertheless, in-  
stantly obeyed. The line of his advance was  
little distant from the coast and nearly parallel  
to it; and the country, as is usual, formed into  
ravines and ridges, ending on the ocean. The  
height of Barrosa is one of those ridges, four  
miles from the bridge thrown across the San  
Pedro river by Zayas, and the height of Ber-  
meja is another, little more than a mile distant  
from the same point. The British, in the exe-  
cution of La Pena's orders, were moving from  
the height of Barrosa to that of Bermeja, through  
a plain thickly wooded, which lies between the  
two, when a French corps marching in two di-  
visions was discovered on their right flank; one  
division being about to ascend the heights of

Barrosa, from which the British had descended, and where a rear-guard of their flank companies, with two Spanish battalions and some artillery, still remained, the other being only a few hundred yards from the wood in which the British were marching.

CHAP.  
XI.  
1811.

The force thus in movement was commanded by Marshal Victor, who, leaving only four thousand men to guard the works of his extensive cantonments before Cadiz, embracing more than thirty miles of country, was manœuvring against the British and Spaniards with the remainder of his army, about 7 or 8,000 men.

General Graham considering that should he continue his march the enemy might attack him to advantage, or being able to move far more rapidly than his fatigued troops, might, after dislodging his rear-guard from the heights of Barrosa, descend to the sea-beach and attack the Spaniards on the height of Bermeja before he could form a junction with them, instantly decided to become the assailant. Under a heavy and well-directed fire of artillery, his corps countermarched, filed out of the wood, and formed into two divisions; the right commanded by Brigadier-General Dilkes, the left by Colonel Wheatley. Immediate skirmishing of the light troops took place, covered by which, General Dilkes advanced to the attack of the French division which had now gained the sum-

CHAP. mit of the Barrosa height ; the Spanish troops  
XL. and rear-guard after some show of resistance  
1811. having very properly descended, and being in  
march, by a wide movement, to unite with the  
British. The French firmly waited the shock ;  
but the undaunted perseverance of the assailants  
prevailed, and they were driven from the hill  
with the loss of two pieces of artillery. At the  
same time the left wing was equally successful ;  
the French advanced against it under a heavy  
fire of musketry, but as soon as the whole of  
the troops could be formed clear of the wood,  
the division was put in movement to meet them.  
Three companies of the Guards, and the 87th  
Regiment, were foremost in a charge which  
was eminently successful, and the eagle of the  
8th light infantry and a howitzer remained in  
their possession. The fugitives were closely  
pursued across a valley, where a reserve at-  
tempted to make a stand ; it was, however,  
quickly routed, and every endeavour of the  
main body to reform was rendered vain by the  
destructive fire of the artillery. At length,  
after a contest of an hour and a half, in which  
the French lost a third of their numbers, they  
marched away completely beaten, leaving six  
pieces of cannon and 500 prisoners in the power  
of the victors ; who on their side also suffered  
severely, having 1,200 killed and wounded.

Marshal Victor, after the action, concentrated

at Xeres nearly all the force under his command, leaving only a small guard in some of the principal works; and himself set off for Seville, to endeavour to preserve that important place. But the solid advantages which should have accrued from this splendid victory were lost by one of those misunderstandings so constant in combined operations where neither of the commanders possess absolute authority.—The main body of the Spaniards, though only three miles distant, had not been brought back to share in the combat; whether from its sudden and unlooked-for commencement, its rapid termination, the apprehension of losing the communication with Cadiz, or from less justifiable causes, cannot be stated. General Graham, however, felt that he ought no longer to repose confidence in a superior, acting under whose command the British division had been exposed to the hazard of destruction; and who, he conceived, had not displayed due activity in coming to his assistance in the struggle, wherein his decision, seconded by the bravery of his troops, had alone caused the discomfiture of the enemy; he therefore withdrew from under La Pena's command, and retired, with the British, a few hours after the battle, into the island of Leon.

CHAP.  
XI.  
1811.

British re-  
tire into the  
island.

La Pena remained for several days on the Bermeja heights, negotiating a further combined operation of the troops of the two nations, with-

CHAP. out which he declined to make any movement  
 XI. to gain possession of the enemy's works, al-  
 1811. though he had above 15,000 men under his  
 command; and the navy, by landing on various  
 points of the harbour, destroying several bat-  
 teries and a quantity of stores, were clearly  
 proving their weak and unguarded state. At  
 length the French, encouraged by his inactivity,  
 and having received a small reinforcement from  
 Seville, made an offensive movement; on which  
 the Spaniards recrossed into the island, the  
 communication over the river was destroyed,  
 and each party resumed its former attitude.

The intelligence of the defeat of Marshal  
 Victor at first occasioned much uneasiness to  
 Marshal Soult, who could then scarcely hope to  
 obtain possession of Badajos for many days; but  
 finding that it was not followed up by any im-  
 mediate effort on the part of the allies, he re-  
 mained to press the capitulation of the garrison,  
 and then returned in person to Seville with only  
 a small detachment, directing Marshal Mortier  
 with the remainder of his army to pursue opera-  
 tions in Portugal.

Marshal  
 Mortier re-  
 duces  
 Campo-  
 mayor.

That officer, on the 12th March, invested  
 Campo-mayor, a large frontier town, which,  
 being partly dismantled, was left with only a  
 piquet of 200 militia to keep guard over five  
 pieces of artillery, mounted on the ramparts;  
 notwithstanding which, Major Tallaia, the go-  
 vernor, an officer, from his profession (the engi-

neers) skilled in the art of defending places, made such an appearance of resistance as induced the French to set down regularly before the town. They brought up a battering train, and went through the whole ceremony of erecting enfilading, mortar, and breaching batteries; and after five days firing effected a practicable breach, when the weak garrison became at their mercy: yet even then, the governor stipulated for twenty-four hours delay for the chance of being relieved; which not occurring, he marched out on the 23d March. Mortier instantly commenced preparations to evacuate the town, and to send his artillery and stores to Badajos; but, before he had time to effect their removal he was interrupted by a corps of the allies.

It had been arranged that General Hill's corps on the south of the Tagus should march to the relief of Badajos the moment that Massena should break up from his cantonments; but when the enemy's troops were first in movement on the 5th March, and their intentions were not positively ascertained, a considerable detachment from it crossed the Tagus at Abrantes to attack the entrenchments and destroy the bridge at Punhete. General Stewart, who commanded, finding the French garrison withdrawn from thence previously to his arrival, crossed the Zezere, to endeavour to hasten the retreat of their main body by threatening its flank. These manœuvres occupied some days, and the corps

CHAP.  
XI.  
1811.

CHAP. was not sufficiently strong to advance in the  
 XI. absence of the detachment; indeed the destruc-  
 1811. tion of the Spanish army under Mendizabal and  
 the premature surrender of Badajos rendered  
 necessary that the force to act in the Alemtejo  
 should be augmented, even beyond the numbers  
 originally allotted for that service; and to in-  
 crease its strength a division of infantry and a  
 brigade of cavalry were ordered to join it from  
 Espinhal. From these causes, and the difficulty  
 of establishing a bridge for want of materials, it  
 was not till the 17th that Sir William Beres-  
 ford (to whom the temporary command in the  
 Alemtejo was confided in consequence of the ab-  
 sence of General Hill) was enabled to recross the  
 Tagus at Tancos, and put his corps in motion;  
 it consisted of the Honourable Wm. Stewart and  
 Lowry Cole's divisions, General Hamilton's Por-  
 tuguese division, with the 13th Light Dragoons,  
 some heavy cavalry, and two brigades of artillery.  
 It marched by Ponte de Sor, Crato, and Porta-  
 legre to Campo-mayor, where it arrived on the  
 25th March. A large convoy had just moved  
 off, consisting of artillery, ammunition waggons,  
 strings of loaded mules, &c. escorted by 800 or  
 900 cavalry, and three battalions of infantry.  
 An immediate pursuit was ordered, and the  
 allied cavalry quickly came up with the retiring  
 force. Some squadrons made a most brilliant  
 charge, and cut their way through the escort;  
 after which, galloping along the road, they

Affair near  
 Campo-  
 mayor.



obliged the guard to throw down their arms, and obtained possession of many guns and wag-  
 gons ; but before the infantry could come up to  
 secure them, the drivers again moved on, and  
 nearly all the convoy effected its retreat to Ba-  
 dajos. The allies in this affair suffered severely,  
 upwards of 150 being killed, wounded, or made  
 prisoners ; owing chiefly to the too great ardour  
 of the dragoons, which led them to pursue the  
 enemy to the very walls of the town.

CHAP.  
 XI.  
 1811.

The French having withdrawn from the right  
 of the Guadiana, it became a consideration  
 how to pass that river, and blockade Badajos  
 before it could be provisioned, or put into a  
 state of defence ; the only two bridges, those of  
 Merida and Badajos, being in their possession,  
 and the army not being accompanied by a pon-  
 toon train. The best ford was readily discovered  
 to be that opposite Fort Juramenha, at this period  
 only practicable for cavalry ; but under any cir-  
 cumstances not to be considered a proper perma-  
 nent communication for an army, as the Guadiana  
 is subject to very sudden rises. A bridge on  
 trestles was therefore put down ; but the day it  
 was finished, the river rose so much as to render  
 it useless ; in consequence, on the 5th April  
 and two following days, the troops were ferried  
 over on rafts. Head-quarters were then trans-  
 ferred to the village of A dos Annos, on the left  
 bank, which, by the surprise and capture of a

Allies pass  
 the Gua-  
 diana.

CHAP. strong cavalry piquet posted to watch the road  
 XI. from Olivença, the French entered in the night;  
 1811. but were almost immediately driven out again  
 by an infantry guard.

During this delay, the French having filled in the trenches before Badajos, partly built up the breach, and removed their battering train, Mortier, on the approach of the allies, leaving a sufficient garrison in the place, retired on Seville. He also left a detachment of 400 men in Olivença, a considerable town fortified with nine regular fronts, standing in an open country, two leagues from Juramenha, and blocking up no communication. It would be difficult to assign a specious reason for leaving so small a body of men as 400 in so large a place, a number totally inadequate to any purposes of protracted defence, and yet far too great to sacrifice without an object. The town was immediately invested, and being found properly secured on all sides, not to lose men unnecessarily by an assault, General Cole, with his division, was ordered to reduce it in form. The Marshal, in the meanwhile, with the main body of the army, advanced to prevent any further supplies being thrown into Badajos, and after a successful cavalry encounter with the enemy at Los Santos, took post at Zafra.

Recover  
 Olivença.

On the 15th, General Cole having established a breaching battery, and having placed field

howitzers to enfilade and see in reverse the part intended to be laid open, sent a flag of truce, offering terms to the governor if he would surrender in half an hour, to which no answer being returned, the batteries opened at the expiration of the period. The wall proved extremely bad, and a great effect was speedily produced, when the governor hoisted a white flag, and expressed his readiness to accept the conditions offered.—General Cole now refused him any terms, insisted on an unconditional surrender, and ordered the artillery to resume their fire. In two hours more the breach became nearly practicable, and the governor, fearing an assault, gave up the town.

CHAP.  
XI.  
1811.

The garrison marched out prisoners, 370 officers and soldiers. So ill provided for defence was the place, that, with the exception of five Spanish field-pieces, all the other guns were without carriages, the commandant, however, had, with much ingenuity, contrived to mount them on cars of the country, after the investment.

Marshal Beresford, on the fall of Olivença, directed his views to the recapture of Badajos, and was taking the preliminary steps by securing the communications across the Guadiana, when Lord Wellington arrived from the army of the north, and the two commanders, under a strong escort, reconnoitred the place. They found the whole enceinte fortified with regular and well

CHAP. covered works, not to be reduced by any means  
XI. of attack at their disposition; except at the point  
1811. of junction of the Rivillas with the Guadiana,  
where a steep and commanding height, washed  
by those rivers, giving a strong natural defence,  
the fortifications were confined to a simple wall,  
built on the crest of the hill, being the front of  
an old castle which domineers over the works of  
the town. Further observing that all the interior  
of the castle could be seen from a small fort  
situated on the heights of Christoval, on the  
Portuguese side of the Guadiana, and that the  
back of the front defence of the castle might be  
enfiladed from thence; it became clear that  
should the fort be reduced, and heavy batteries  
erected within it, no body of men exposed to  
their fire could stand to dispute a breach in the  
wall, which formed the sole defence of the castle.  
That wall, from its uncovered position, appeared  
liable to be battered down from a distance; and  
as, when in possession of the castle, the resistance  
of the town must, under its commanding influence,  
cease, Badajos might, by this mode of attack,  
be captured in a fortnight. The only apprehension  
was, that the river and the steep ascent of the height  
might prove insurmountable obstacles; but officers  
of engineers having in the night ascended to the  
very foot of the wall, and ascertained that in reality  
they presented no difficulties, the plan was adopted.

Lord Wellington being recalled to the north by the movements of Massena for the relief of Almeida, the conduct of the siege was left to Marshal Beresford. Two different descriptions of bridges for the conveyance of artillery and stores were completed over the Guadiana on the 23d of April, and the following day was fixed for the investment of the place. The weather had apparently settled fine, and every thing promised well, but such is the uncertainty of military operations, and on such uncontrollable causes does success frequently depend, that from the fall of distant torrents, the river swelled perpendicularly in the night seven feet; before the bridges could be taken up they were carried away, and the materials composing them floated down the stream; so that on the 24th, the army, far from being able to act offensively, had lost all its communications with Portugal.

CHAP.

XI.

1811.

Investment  
of Badajos.

In a few days, by great exertions, another bridge was prepared, and the place was invested. On the night of the 8th May the siege commenced, and notwithstanding the rockiness of the ground, an incessant fire of artillery, and a vigorous sortie, in which the garrison obtained some success, a battery to breach Christoval opened at day-light on the 11th. It was, however, quickly silenced, the young Portuguese gunners, who alone were employed, being too

Siege com-  
menced.

CHAP. unpractised for such a service, and their guns  
XL also proving extremely bad: from these causes,  
1811. in a few hours, only one piece of artillery remained serviceable.

Marshal Beresford ordered additional guns to be brought from Elvas, and was in the act of opening ground against the castle when he received intelligence that Marshal Soult had arrived at Llerena with a force to succour the place; in consequence, the siege was raised, and the stores and artillery removed on the night of the 14th, under protection of General Cole's division. At the moment the rear-guard drew off, the garrison made a sortie in force, by which a Portuguese light battalion suffered severely, making the total loss during the operation above 100 killed and 650 wounded.

The army marched to Valverde and united with corps of Spaniards under General Castaños, Blake, and Balasteros, drawn from Cadiz and other places, after which the whole took post, to give battle to the advancing force, and prevent any supplies being thrown into Badajos. To induce the Spaniards heatily to co-operate with the British and Portuguese in this measure, Lord Wellington had some time before proposed that, whenever the troops of the three nations should act together, the officer having the superior rank should command; consequently Castaños, as such, might now have assumed the chief direction; but with a self-denial and mo-

deration rarely found, he ceded his right to Marshal Beresford, stating, that real strength and not nominal rank ought to give precedence, and that the Spaniards, as the weakest body, would, on this occasion, consider themselves merely as auxiliaries.

CHAP.  
XI.  
1811.

The position selected for the combined armies was behind the little river Albuera, where the roads leading from Seville to Olivença and Badajoz separate, after crossing the river by a bridge close to the village of Albuera. The Albuera runs into the Guadiana, and the village of the same name is on its left bank. The ground on the western side rises in gentle swells and easy slopes; on the summit of this rise, nearly parallel to the river, the army was formed; its left having the village of Albuera in its front, and the banks of the river being a further defence. The right had no particular appui, the swellings of the ground succeeding each other so rapidly, that every extension to one knoll rendered it desirable to prolong the line to the next; therefore, after drawing it out to the utmost, and placing the right on a commanding feature, ground still remained on that flank very favourable to the enemy. Above the point forming the right of the line the Albuera is merely a rivulet. On the eastern side of the river, in front of the left of the position occupied by the allies, the country is perfectly flat and

Battle of  
Albuera.  
16th May.

CHAP. open for an extent of six or seven hundred  
XI. yards; at that distance are gentle rises covered  
1811. with thick woods, which, opposite to the right,  
wind round in a semicircular form till they  
meet the Albuera stream. On the night of the  
15th, Marshal Soult took post on the woody  
hills above described, with 20,000 infantry,  
3,000 cavalry, and 40 pieces of cannon. Mar-  
shal Beresford, to oppose him, had two divisions  
of British and Portuguese, one division of Por-  
tuguese, and 14,000 Spanish troops, composing  
a body of 27,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry, and  
32 pieces of cannon.

The Spaniards were formed on the right in  
two lines; General Stewart's division was in the  
centre, and General Hamilton's Portuguese di-  
vision on the left; General Cole's division,  
(which joined from Badajos as the action com-  
menced,) and a Portuguese brigade, formed a  
second line, in rear of the centre; the village of  
Albuera was occupied by a brigade of light  
infantry, under General Alten; and the cavalry,  
under General Lumley, were posted to cover  
the right flank of the Spaniards.

At eight o'clock on the morning of the 16th,  
a heavy French column marched out of the  
wood, directing its course on the village of  
Albuera, as if to attack the left of the allies;  
but whilst all attention was directed to that  
column, which was only a feint, the main body



of the enemy, under cover of the wood to the right, crossed the Albuera above the position, and began to ascend the heights on the right flank of the Spaniards unopposed. As soon as the heads of the columns debouched from the wood, and this movement could be observed, Marshal Beresford profited by the little time yet remaining to give the Spanish troops a new alignment fronting their original flank, and to throw back the right of his reserve the better to support them. The French, from the heights they had gained, being on nearly equal ground, directed their main effort against the Spaniards, who waited their approach with firmness, maintaining a heavy fire on the columns till overpowered by numbers, when they fell back, and the enemy began to deploy on one of the most commanding points of the position. At the same time, the French cavalry threatened the rear of the allies by a wide movement round their right flank, and the column which first advanced, having seized the village of Albuera, made fresh demonstrations of forcing the left. The issue of the contest depended therefore on recovering the ground from which the Spaniards had been driven. General Stewart's division was ordered forward for that purpose; heavy rain with a thick mist at the moment obscured the combatants from each other, and when the leading brigade of the division was in the act of

CHAP.  
XI.  
1811.

CHAP. charging, some squadrons of Polish lancers,  
XI. which in the mist had wheeled unperceived into  
1811. their rear, fell unexpectedly on their right flank,  
and made all but the left battalion prisoners;  
also capturing the guns which supported the  
advance. The day now appeared lost, but General  
Stewart with the remainder of his division,  
and General Cole with part of his division, im-  
mediately moving forward in line, and charging  
the enemy before their formation was complete,  
drove them off the hill with prodigious slaughter,  
and fixed victory with the allies.

Never was there a more severe trial of individual and collective bravery; Major-General Houghton, Colonels Myers and Duckworth, with many distinguished officers, fell whilst gallantly leading on their men, whole ranks of whom, on both sides, were observed after the combat extended on the ground in the order in which they had fought; and fields far in the rear of the allies were strewed with the bodies of Polish lancers, who had penetrated singly beyond the contending parties. These desperadoes galloped about in all directions, spearing many of the wounded men and their defenceless supporters; one of them even charged Marshal Beresford, who, by superior strength, threw him from his horse, when the stroke of a sabre from an orderly dragoon finished the Pole's career.

The French officers made many efforts, but in

vain, to rally their men, and renew the attack ; they therefore retired them, under protection of their superior cavalry, to the hills on the opposite side of the river, where they remained during the following day, keeping a division of infantry in the plain, and holding the bridge over the Albuera. The allies during the same period remained in order of battle on the ground where they had fought, prepared for a second struggle, the crest of their position being decorated with some hundred flags taken from the Polish lancers, which, whilst waving defiance, presented a novel as well as animating appearance. The day, however, passed without the slightest hostile movement.

CHAP.  
XI.  
1811.

On the morning of the 18th, the troops were again under arms an hour before day-light ; but as the dawn commenced it became known that Marshal Soult, having employed the previous day in sending his incumbrances to the rear, had during the night commenced his retreat on Seville. It was subsequently ascertained by an enumeration of the bodies left on the field, and by an intercepted return of the wounded carried off by the French, that they lost in this sanguinary contest fully 8000 men. The British and Portuguese also suffered severely, 1000 being killed, 3000 wounded, and 570 made prisoners ; the Spaniards lost above 2000 in killed and wounded.

## CHAP.

## XI.

1811.

18th May.

As soon as the retreat of the enemy was discovered the cavalry were detached to hang on their rear, and in a gallant affair at Usagre made some prisoners. The same day the infantry resumed its ground before Badajos, and Marshal Beresford had the satisfaction to find that the French had been unable to communicate with the garrison, and consequently that the object of his giving battle had been fully attained.

19th.

Lord Wellington at this period assumed the personal command in the Alemtejo, and shortly afterwards the divisions detached from the north after the battle of Fuentes de Honor joined, and the allies obtained a decided superiority. It was, however, to be apprehended that the French army of Portugal, to the command of which Marshal Marmont had just succeeded, would speedily cross the Tagus and give the advantage of numbers to the enemy. The meditated operation against Badajos must consequently be of a rapid nature, and officers having ascertained by personal examination in the night that no alteration had been made to the castle defences, it was decided to renew the former attack with a greater power of artillery, and every thing that Elvas could supply was drawn from thence.

21st.

Second at-  
tack of Ba-  
dajos.

On the 27th, General Houston's division invested the place on the right, and Generals Picton's and Hamilton's divisions on the left of

the river. Two days afterwards ground was broken against Christoval; but it was with difficulty cover could be obtained at the advanced points, as the garrison had scraped away the earth and left the rock bare: moreover, being fully prepared and in expectation of the event, they opened a fire of cannon and musketry the instant the party began to work, which continued without intermission throughout the night; nevertheless, by means of wool-sacks and other auxiliaries, the batteries were all completed on the 2d June, and at day light on the 3d, opened on both sides of the river. The fire was kept up with such success, that on the night of the 5th the breach in Christoval, on being reconnoitred, was found practicable, and at midnight was assaulted. The advance of the storming party entered the ditch and attempted to ascend the breach, when they discovered that between the period of dark and the time of their advance the earth had been removed, and the lower seven feet of the wall was standing clear. Instead of retiring, which might have been effected with little loss, the spirit of the men led them to endeavour to force over the wall, in which impracticable attempt they persevered for above an hour, whilst the enemy from the top of the parapet showered down upon them shells, hand-grenades, stones, &c. killing and

CHAP.  
XI.  
1811.

CHAP. wounding half their numbers, when the residue  
XL retired.

1811.

9th June.

During the two following days the breach was widened, and being again rendered practicable was, in order to prevent its being cleared, assaulted immediately that it became dark. The party advanced with resolution; but the situation of the defenders was quite changed. At the former assault there were only 75 men in the fort; it was now fully manned, with ample reserves, and the French, elated by recent success, received the assailants with cheers and invitations to approach. The commanding officer and the engineer conducting the column were early killed, the next in seniority were wounded, and the remainder endeavoured to force in as they could. The garrison threw into the ditch, as at the former attack, quantities of bags filled with powder, shells, hand-grenades, stones, &c. and there being no fire from the trenches to prevent it, they mounted on the top of the parapet, from whence they took a deadly aim, and two thirds of the assailants were killed or maimed before their situation could be reported and orders sent for their recall. The wounded Portuguese and English, stretched in great numbers on the glacis, preventing an immediate renewal of the fire from the besieger's batteries, the French diligently availed themselves of the

opportunity to clear the foot of the breach, and the rubbish produced by the two last days firing was in the course of the night completely removed.

CHAP.  
XI.  
1811.

Nothing but the failure of this attack could have saved Badajoz, as the breach in the castle was practicable, and the besiegers only waited the fall of Christoval to give the assault. That enterprise was necessarily dependent on the expulsion of the enemy from the fort, as the artillery from thence sweeps along the foot of the castle wall and over the ground in its front.

From the exhausted state of the country, it had been found impracticable to bring up battering artillery from Lisbon, and the guns used were Portuguese, made of brass, which being unequal to bear constant firing were rapidly becoming unserviceable, and the shot provided for the siege were nearly expended. Considerable further supplies would therefore be required to render the breach in Christoval again in a state to be assaulted, and to maintain a constant fire on that in the castle to prevent its being cleared; and as during that delay the armies of Soult and Marmont, known to be in rapid march for the relief of the place, would have time to unite, Lord Wellington ordered the siege to be converted into a blockade. The last of the guns and stores were removed on the night of the 12th without molestation from the garrison,

Allies raise  
the siege.

CHAP. and the total loss of the besiegers during the  
 XI. operation did not exceed 118 killed and 367  
 1811. wounded.

The Spaniards under Blake were detached along the right bank of the Guadiana to cross into the country of Niebla and make an attempt to carry off some of the French posts, which had been weakened by drafts, to form the advancing army, whilst Lord Wellington took post in front of Albuera with his own forces to cover the blockade. The allies in that situation held Soult's corps in check till the near approach of Marmont rendered a retreat necessary, when they recrossed the Guadiana, and on the 19th the French relieved Badajos. The following day the corps from the north, under Sir B. Spencer, having kept a parallel movement with the enemy in its front, united with the main body of the army at Elvas. The whole of the allied forces being now assembled together, and having the support of two fortresses and a numerous artillery, it was decided to give the two Marshals battle, should they attempt to penetrate into Portugal. To engage with advantage, a position selected on the heights in rear of Campo-mayor, the front of which was well flanked by the guns of that fortress, was further strengthened by works and batteries, and the troops were placed en bivouac in the woods on the banks of the Caya, in readiness to occupy

20th June.



the position on the first movement of the enemy. CHAP.  
XI.

The united armies of Marshals Marmont and Soult exceeded 70,000 men, of which 8000 were cavalry, whilst the allied force opposed to them mustered only 56,000, including 3,500 cavalry. 1811.

It was, therefore, decidedly advantageous to the French to fight a general action; and from the defensive arrangements made by Lord Wellington to meet it, such was hourly expected. Under this impression every one deemed the moment arrived, when, on the 22d June, two very strong bodies of French cavalry crossed the Guadiana and advanced towards Elvas and Campo-mayor. They proved, however, to be only a reconnoissance: one made prisoners a piquet of three officers and sixty men of a dragoon regiment recently arrived from England, which mistook them for Portuguese: the other, after manœuvring for several hours, endeavouring to ascertain the position and numbers of the allied army, which led to a good deal of firing from Campo-mayor and skirmishing between the cavalry, retired without having gained any information whatever, the main body of the troops being purposely concealed behind the hills. After this the hostile armies remained tranquilly in presence of each other for more than a month, till the exhausted state of the country obliged Marshals Soult and Marmont to

App. 14.  
page 353.

CHAP. separate their forces; the former retired on Seville,  
<sup>XI.</sup>  
 and the latter crossed the Tagus to Salamanca,  
 1811. watched by a parallel movement of the allies by  
 Portalegre to Fuente-Guinaldo, where head-  
 quarters were established on the 10th August,  
 which concluded the operations attendant on  
 the invasion of Portugal.

END OF VOL. I.









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